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When the Boat Comes In

Baldwin once described Lloyd George with disapproval as a 'dynamic force in politics'. Oil is another such force. Without it Scottish nationalism would not be as strong, the OECD countries would not have such deficits nor such a fear of reflation – and Britain would not be commencing its second industrial revolution a hundred miles north-east of the Shetlands. The danger is that we will not exploit this ludicrously fortunate windfall to the full and its impact will be lost under a surfeit of conflicting claims. The Prime Minister arranged for two of his cabinet colleagues to argue the dynamics of oil revenue distribution. The intellectual level of the resulting discussion paper has at least been pitched higher than the SNP's primitive 'Your choice – poor British or rich Scots'; but Bevan asserted that socialism is about priorities and priorities should have been at the centre of the distribution debate between the two wings of the Labour Party. As yet the options have only been indecisively itemised, not ordered.

There are other disheartening signs. The most often repeated explanation of Labour's inadequacies has been that socialism can only be afforded when the pound, the balance of payments and the economy are strong. With the arrival of oil one might have expected this intellectual crutch to be discarded gleefully, instead the Chancellor under the protective wing of the Treasury is clinging like an obsessed hypochondriac to more potions of self-sacrifice. First claim on the oil money does not go to the squalor in which the working class of Clydeside, Tyneside and Merseyside have to live, no, we must honour obligations to international financiers, men whose loyalty stretches about a second beyond the next stock market quote and who scuttle from sterling at the first whisper of socialism.

With very little thanks to the Tories (who would have gladly let the oil companies slip away with the second 'biggest rip-off in history') the Government will be receiving £3,500m. annual revenue by 1985, enough to double either the housing budget or cut income tax by 7 per cent, but still not a large sum in terms of the whole economy. That is why Tony Benn is right to insist that the money is not scattered in some ineffectual compromise around all the possible options. It must be concentrated preferably in a special oil fund, to create service employment and to invest in a long-term manufacturing base capable of contributing to our balance of payments as successfully as oil does now. The present extra million jobless cost in unemployment benefits and lost taxes much more than the Government's anticipated annual oil revenue. We simply cannot afford to live off oil while unemployment rises, neither now nor in the future.

The Government has been dishonestly playing down the unemployment trends, happy for the public to be uplifted by the financial boom. Its only prospect of salvation is if oil's removal of the balance of payment's constraint allows a Chancellor to sustain a steady domestic expansion without so much fear of the effect of imports. But the crucial and as yet unresolved question behind that is whether the cabinet intends simply to create the expansionary conditions for private industry to invest spontaneously (something it has conspicuously failed to do this century) or whether the Government, recognising the uniqueness of the moment and the consequences of investors failing them, intends to channel directly investment funds via the NEB and planning agreements. It is not merely a matter of efficiency. The issue turns on whether the Government sees oil as a means of resuscitating an ailing but powerful capitalism or of altering the balance of economic sovereignty away from the monopolies towards the state.

The paradox of social democracy has been that in order to satisfy the public's rising expectations, it seeks constantly to extract rewards from capitalism and at the same time to inhibit its scope by increasing intervention. It enmeshes capitalism but does not replace it. Oil offers the potential of ending the stalemate through the control and revival of manufacturing industry, the ultimate master of our fortunes. It hardly needs adding that Moses only had the luck to find one Promised Land.

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

What about the Bleep?

Last week in this column I published a perfectly accurate account of a conversation with Martin Flannery, MP. The intention was to show how an emotional issue is best set forth coolly and reasonably, and how this was not always the favoured method of the left wing of the Labour Party. Mr Flannery has now written to this paper (see Letters p. 728) complaining of a breach of trust, and threatening to pursue the matter with the relevant authorities in the House of Commons. I would therefore like to make it absolutely clear that I in no way apologise for what I wrote, or for any distress I may have caused Mr Flannery. Lobby Rule 'X' states simply: 'All insults are on the record.' The reason is obvious: one man cannot tell another man that he is the scum of the earth, and expect him to keep the matter under his hat. An insult cannot logically be a confidence. Mr Flannery is abusing his position as an MP if he insists that his boorish behaviour be protected by rules designed for a quite different purpose. Furthermore, ha! I cannot help noticing that in his letter Mr Flannery has broken a 'confidence' himself, by describing (without permission) a conversation with Mr Simon Hoggart of the *Guardian*. I deeply regret that Mr Hoggart, who has no means of defending himself, should have been dragged into this. Obviously it will become impossible for the Lobby to go on working with MPs, if the MPs themselves start writing letters to the press revealing details of their off-the-record conversations. By the way, Mr Flannery's memory is at fault. He has met me several times, and gave me a wigging on the last occasion I wrote about him. Finally, if the 'group of MPs' who urged Mr Flannery to complain is Arthur Latham, would Mr Flannery kindly tell Mr Latham to go and jump in the lake? Cheers.

Enough of this. I want to discuss the present state of affairs over the Scottish *bleep* Bill, although I confess that I am somewhat hampererd by an internal censorship mechanism which makes it impossible for me to think of, or write, or say the word in question. Independence for Scotland is one thing, *bleep* is quite another. On independence, my position is as follows: if the Scots want it, they must have it. The proper judges of national questions are the nations themselves. Nobody else can help them, nobody else should try to hinder them. 'I want' should always get. The worst judges of national questions are the citizens of the dominating power. I cannot *see* the necessity of Scottish independence, but I do not expect that given my background, I *should* see it. The best thing is to learn from history, admit one's blindness on the matter, and say – very well, if that's what you really want, go ahead.

Now *bleep* on the other hand is a question on which an Englishman has every right to an opinion. It is after all as much an English as a Scottish invention. It is a device by which we hope to preserve the unity of the queendom. But the question arises: is it really necessary? is it really wanted? Barring accidents, we expect two referendums on the matter late next year. And why are we going to have them? Only because, after last year's fiasco, it was decided that the Welsh MPs would be kept sweet, during the passage of the Bills, if they could see that the Welsh Bill was going to lead nowhere. There has been, all along, a bogus symmetry in these measures. Because the Scots want *bleep*, we must offer *bleep* to the Welsh. Because the Welsh MPs want a referendum, we must give one to the Scots. It has been largely assumed that the Scots will vote Yes, and the Welsh No.

But will the Scots vote Yes? The question is worth asking, since in the last months there has been considerable doubt in Scotland over whether the measure will be, or should be, supported. The fact is – as many Scottish MPs have told me – I am not the only person who's bored to death with *bleep*. Indeed it is quite possible that the poll in the referendum will be very low indeed – say 40 per cent. An article in the Scottish edition of last Sunday's *Observer* was headed 'Joining forces for a big Scottish "Yes".' But the text itself told a rather different story:

> Visible mass reaction to the Bill's survival was zero. The Scots did nothing and said nothing. But neither did they in February when the old Scotland and Wales Bill was killed on the guillotine vote... The people believe in keeping sex for marriage and their opinions for the polling booth.

I'm very glad to hear it. The author continues:

> Scottish silences are deceptive. The SNP are off the boil, but simmering rather than cooling down. Bleep was never really on the boil at all: it is seen as a compromise designed by the Government to conciliate moderate nationalism while preserving the etcetera etcetera.

Now what I want to know is, are those Scottish silences really so deceptive? (And what, by the way, is the difference between boiling and simmering? I thought simmering was a mild form of boiling.) As one SNP MP told me this week, there is considerable fear that Callaghan's success in reintroducing the Bills has seriously undermined the nationalist cause. There is depression in the ranks of the SNP, a feeling that they peaked far too soon. They have not succeeded in making the inroads into the Labour vote that they wished. Indeed a recent poll showed a considerable recovery for Labour. The SNP only want *bleep* as a means of achieving independence (or rather, a large majority of them only want this).

A minority of the SNP are now thinking very much in terms of campaigning for a No vote in the referendum. In Westminster this minority is very small, well – rather slim, but it tells me that in Scotland it is very much more vocal. The minority is worried that the SNP will have difficulty in getting its own members to campaign enthusiastically for an Assembly they do not want. They do not actually predict that the Assembly will be rejected by the public, but they do feel a danger in the Teddy Taylor position – that the great Scottish public just do not want the measures proposed. If the poll is low, and if the result is hardly convincing, they want to be able to say: there you are, exactly what we've been saying all along, what the Scottish public want is nothing more nor less than total independence, none of these half measures.

There is, perhaps, a fear of the referendum itself as the first real test of Scottish opinion. It will not be like the EEC referendum. There will be no consensus among either the major parties or the establishment at large in its favour. Indeed the sort of business interests which were in favour of the one are against the other. The Tories, having found the only place in the political spectrum which was vacant, will remain opposed. The Labour Party in Scotland, having been bludgeoned in the past by the pro-bleep brigade, and by the need to keep Labour in office, will begin to set up a campaign of opposition based not, as hitherto, on the threat to British unity, but only the cost and irrelevance of the measures proposed, and on the undesirability of creating another bureaucracy. The pro-*bleep* brigade will be deeply divided as to why they want *bleep*. The antis will have a very good chance of being heard.

Suppose, just suppose, the vote is No. Would that matter from Labour's point of view? Certainly there would be a lot of egg on a lot of faces. But those referendums are useful things. After the initial embarrassment, Labour could perfectly well say: we honoured our election pledge; we did everything we could; how were we to know that Scotland would change its mind? It would be a defeat in one way, but in another way it would be a famous victory for Callaghan. He would have survived another year with practically no legislation to show for it, only a series of hideous *bleeps*, receding in the memory.

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Patrick Seale

Sadat in Jerusalem

President Sadat is the first Arab politician to understand the importance of television in the conduct of foreign policy. Faultlessly performing in Jerusalem last weekend, before one of the greatest gatherings of journalists and cameras ever assembled since the second world war, this maestro of the media has profoundly altered the perception of the Middle East conflict for millions throughout the world, and particularly for Arabs and Israelis. To formulate a problem afresh is not to solve it, but is to point to new ways in which it can be solved.

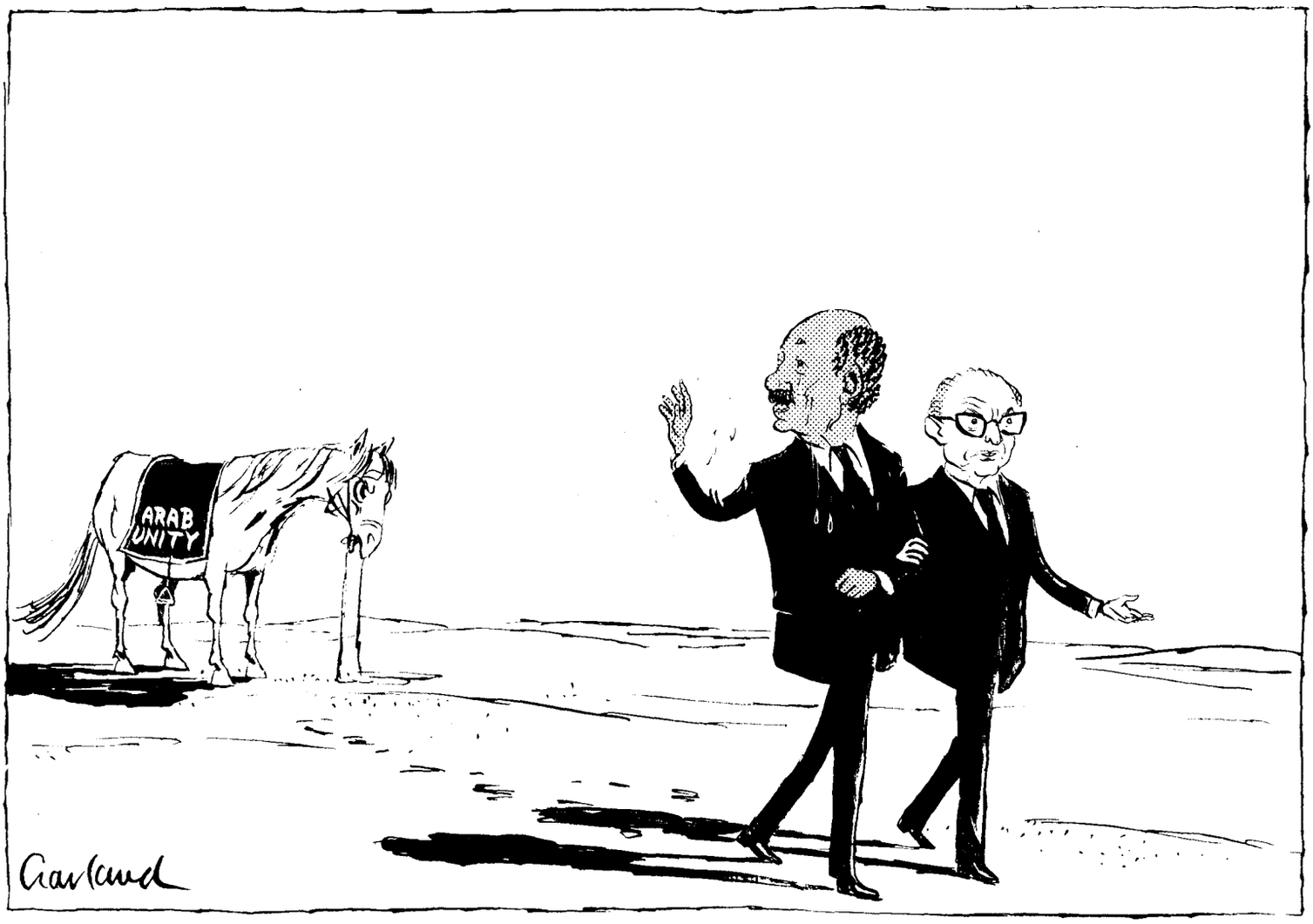
The psycho-drama Sadat staged, together with his host Menachem Begin, has left the local audience faint with emotion, its mind exploding with unfamiliar images and ideas. Some Arabs, not fully comprehending what has happened, have been goaded into old-fashioned fury: in others, hope battles with concern. Meanwhile, the Israelis walk on air, pinching themselves, light with a sense of release from fear and guilt. That Egypt, the proud yet tired giant of the Nile, the old adversary whom they know they have hurt, should now in brotherly compassion recognise and accept them, welcoming them to the Middle Eastern community of which they long to be a part, has touched them very deeply.

A barrier of hate has come down, a mental block overcome. After 30 years of constraint, the new climate of liberation has opened up thinking on the central issues of the nature of the Jewish state and its relations with its neighbours. Sadat has carried the debate into every Israeli living room. And after the exclamations and even tears which greeted, say, the sight on television of the Israeli army band rehearsing the Egyptian national anthem, or the President of Egypt standing to attention to the plangent strains of the *Hatikva*, after the handshakes and fanfares and the children waving the two flags, there is a feeling that the time has come for fundamental decisions on borders, on national goals, on ideology, ending the ambiguities of the past ten years.

Sadat's achievement is to have understood that in dealing with a democratic society such as Israel he had access to the levers of political change. By coming in peace, by speaking direct to the people, by preaching the twin message of security for all and a renunciation of the use of force, he has mobilised enormous expectations in Israeli opinion and confronted its leaders with a clear choice. It has been in a way as daring as the October war itself.

In their hearts most Israelis are doves: they are only hawks out of despair. By the patent sincerity of his peaceful intentions, Sadat has sought to win them over to the necessity of territorial restitution, thus building up domestic pressures on Begin. In this media campaign, the only credible weapon left to him, he is continuing to woo American opinion as assiduously as he is now appealing to Israeli. It was no accident that, when his plane first landed at Lod last Saturday, the first figures to break loose from his official entourage were that formidable triumvirate Barbara Walters (ABC), Walter Cronkite (CBS) and John Chancellor (NBC).

But if Sadat held the centre of the stage throughout the visit, Begin also displayed a strong sense of political theatre. The two men were clearly exhilarated by their historic encounter. By agreeing to talk face-to-face across the Great Middle East Divide



'My beautiful! My beautiful! That standest meekly by
With thy proud-arched and glossy neck, and dark and fiery eye!
Fret not to roam the desert now with all thy wingèd speed:
I may not mount on thee again — thou'rt sold, my Arab steed!'
CAROLINE NORTON: 'The Arab's Farewell to his Steed'

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they have become adversary-partners, competing yet colluding, with a strong stake in each other's success. Egypt and Israel, the two most important states in the area, have joined forces in the quest for peace. They have agreed to continue their dialogue and to work together for an early reconvening of the Geneva conference. Many familiar patterns of Middle East politics will have to be rearranged.

Why did Sadat do it? Why take the colossal risk of flouting every Arab taboo, of going in person to treat with the enemy when still in a state of war and his country under partial occupation? The answer is that Egypt cannot afford to wait for better days. Its economy is approaching the moment of truth. It is on the verge of collapse and needs a massive injection of funds. The whole thrust of Sadat's policy since taking over from Nasser in 1970 has been to break the strangle-hold of the past and throw off the burdens of the futile enmity with Israel.

Carter's Decline

The October war was a political war intended to destroy the cruel log-jam of 'no-peace-no-war' and thus open the way to an honourable settlement. This, too, was the intention of the two Sinai disengagement agreements. The second, in September 1975, earned him a year of Arab abuse and the charge that he had sold out; but it was only a half-way house, and the flood of aid and investment he hoped for was a mere trickle. He needed to make sure that the movement towards peace was irreversible. But in recent weeks the Geneva conference, for which he has pressed so hard, seemed to be slipping away over the horizon. His peace policy was being undermined by petty, procedural wrangles over how the Palestinians were to be represented. He found, too, that he could not control the response of Syria, so that the Arab camp risked entering a negotiation bitterly divided.

But what finally drove him to independent action was Jimmy Carter's political decline. Sadat grew impatient of American overlordship of the peace process when it became evident that Washington was unable or unwilling to exercise effective leverage on Israel. Slowly, the US seemed to be switching from a bold search for the 'global settlement', which Carter had said he wanted, to a return to small and uncertain steps. Latterly, it seemed as if the reconvening of the Geneva conference had become the prime American objective irrespective of what could be achieved there. Sadat's declaration of independence from this faltering procedure was his dramatic statement that he was prepared to go to the end of the earth, to the Knesset itself, to get the peace momentum going. Begin immediately took him up on it. American pique at these developments has stemmed partly from a fear of being excluded from what had been an American-sponsored show, but also from a concern lest Sadat might be tempted into a separate peace with Israel, which America would be asked to underwrite but which would also set the area ablaze and destroy the extensive network of Arab friendships which the United States has built up. The outcome of the visit has largely laid these fears to rest.

Whatever his critics may say, President Sadat has emerged an immeasurably bigger man from his Israeli journey. He has captured the imagination of the world and a Nobel Peace Prize seems certain to be awarded him. On the super-power front, he has cut loose from American apron strings and is once again his own man. This is a more dignified posture and allows him a wider margin of manoeuvre. On the Arab front, he has recovered for Egypt the primacy it had lost to Saudi Arabia because of its great wealth and to Syria because of its intervention in Lebanon. Long in eclipse in Arab politics, Cairo has made a great comeback. Sadat's enemies must now either destroy him or join his bandwagon sooner or later; and my hunch is that it will be the latter. The immediate problem is that of his physical security rather than the viability of his policies.

His achievements will inevitably be judged by the extent of the concessions he secures from Israel. Admittedly, Premier Begin seemed at first a bit niggardly in not rewarding him with a gesture as generous as his own. Begin's answering speech in the Knesset was a lacklustre performance. It was as if the Polish Jewish host – stiff, formalistic, sceptical from centuries of adversity – could not quite span the cultural gap between himself and his expansive Egyptian guest. Seated at the apex of the Knesset's inner horseshoe (as if in the front row of the stalls) Begin, Yadin his Deputy Premier, Dayan his Foreign Minister and Finance Minister Erlich, listened to Sadat's oratory in different poses of laconic detachment – seen from the press gallery, four pale bald pates, one transected by the black ribbon of an eye-patch. But the climate of the visit soon warmed. The public statements by each side of the maximalist positions, predictable opening moves in the chess game, were followed by all sorts of hints of greater flexibility. Whatever his critics may say, Sadat can claim to have set in motion a significant evolution in Israeli attitudes and positions. For one thing, the visit has convinced many that there is no chance of a separate agreement with Egypt and that it is not in Israel's true interests to pursue such a divisive objective. For another, many more Israelis are now convinced that clear decisions on final borders, North, East as well as South, are now imperative. This is a big change from the widely held, if not always admitted, Israeli assumption that by some sort of sleight of hand the status quo of occupation could be kept going for ever.

Shifting Beliefs

Finally, Sadat has focused the Israeli mind, as never before, on the central issue of the Palestinians and their future. The problem has been surveyed rather than solved, but this candid, face-to-face charting of differences, together with the will to seek a compromise by peaceful negotiations, is in itself a great advance. 'The Palestine Arabs are an issue,' Begin conceded in the final press conference, and we have proposals to solve this issue'. Golda Meir, as Prime Minister notoriously on record as having denied the existence of the Palestinians, now made her confessional. 'As a grandmother to a grandfather', she said to President Sadat, 'of course we realise there are Palestinians, and in our peace treaty with Jordan there must be a solution for them.' Shimon Peres spoke of a 'Palestinian identity' and was congratulated by Sadat on it. The really significant shift has been one of ideological reference. Before Sadat's visit, Begin seemed immovably rooted in mystical Zionism – an irredentist Israeli claim to ownership of the 'whole' land as promised in the Bible. In a telling phrase, Noah Lucas of Sheffield University, one of the most perceptive British students of Zionism, has called this 'degenerate Zionism': 'The subservience of Jewry to the land rather than reconstruction of the land to serve Jewry.' Begin has not renounced his beliefs: such an outcome would have been inconceivable. But I must report that, in statement after statement from Begin himself and from his parliamentary colleagues, I detected a shift in underlying rationale from this heroic view of ancient Jewish history to the modern requirements of security. The predominant impression after Sadat's visit is that, in the great public debate he has started, Israel is gearing itself up to make all the territorial concessions compatible with its security. The emphasis in the leadership today – and it is a movement led by Dayan – is not to stake mystical claims to the soil but rather to be smart enough to make a good deal in 'border compromises', to strike a hard bargain on the ground. This is a great advance for political pragmatism and common sense. Those Arabs who accuse Sadat of giving away a lot for nothing should not underestimate the current he has set moving in the Israeli mind – the necessary precondition for the emergence of any peace formula the Arabs could conceivably accept.

A Taste of Peace

Sadat has done something more. Hitherto, in the past 30 years of tireless guard duty, the notion of peace has meant nothing to the Israelis. It was an empty concept with no possible application to their lives. By giving them a taste of what life could be like at peace with the Arabs, Sadat has taught them that there is something about peace itself which is emotionally and ideologically satisfying – as rewarding, if not more so, than establishing a new settlement on a barren hillside in hostile territory.

Of course, despite the visit, the gap is still wide between Egyptian and Israeli conceptions of secure frontiers: Sadat rejected as sheer annexation the Israeli euphemism of 'border compromises'. But it is on Palestine that the mental abyss is greatest, and on this issue Sadat could speak only by proxy. Insofar as one can read the Israeli mood, opinion is still overwhelmingly opposed to the division of Jerusalem or to the creation of a Palestinian state. 'Compromise' formulae for the West Bank tend either to take the form of a dismemberment of the territory between Israel and Jordan, with Jordan taking the Arab urban areas, or to be variants of the so-called 'Dayan plan' in which Jordan and Israel would together exercise condominium powers – the one political and the other military – over the whole territory. If Jews were also to have the right to settle there, this might, so the think-

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ing goes, be a way for Begin to sell the idea to the Israeli public – and to himself. It is evident that this generation of Israeli leaders cannot think 'politically' about Arab Palestine without violence to their own identity and to the legitimacy of the state they have created. Would that there were a Palestinian Arab of Sadat's stature able to talk to them direct, dispelling this mental block in turn and salvaging something respectable for the Palestinians from the impending carve-up. Instead, this week has seen the entrenched and decaying bureaucracy of the PLO engaging in lamentable internal polemics, with Arafat and the Syrian protégé Zuhair Muhsin at each other's throats.

Sadat has set the Israel leadership on the road to what he described as 'hard and drastic decisions'. He has made a powerful impression on Israeli opinion in favour of concessions. He continues to make inroads on American opinion in the same cause. He has let Israel understand that, should it reject his overture, no other Arab leader could make the same journey. Arabs and Israelis would return to the dark night of war. Is there any other credible Arab strategy but Sadat's?

Jerusalem

Alexander Cockburn

The Politics of the TV Spectacular

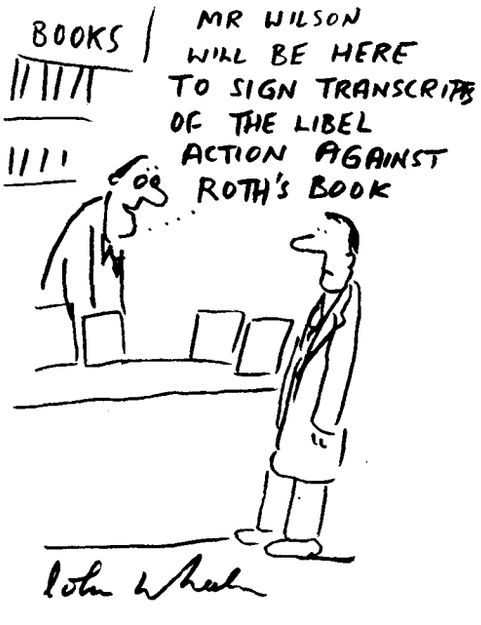
Early last Sunday morning in Washington there was a comical illustration of the dominance of the US television networks in the co-ordination and presentation of the Sadat visit to Israel. President Carter had gone to a local church to pray for the success of the whole enterprise – and indeed did so 'with eyes tightly shut' as one reporter put it (no doubt to underline the fervour of his appeals to the Almighty). A television reporter waylaid the President as he sallied forth from the church and Carter launched into a leisurely disquisition on the delicate position Assad of Syria had been placed in.

As he did so, a nervous expression suddenly appeared on the reporter's face and it became apparent that the small microphone lodged in one of his ears had conveyed to him the tidings that Sadat had commenced his speech in the Knesset. Reporters are not normally in the habit of cutting the President of the United States off brusquely in mid-sentence but this is what happened. Just one more *vox pop* cut short in his prime, Carter was urged firmly towards his limousine while the viewers were switched to more exciting events in Jerusalem.

When the inevitable moment comes for Anwar Sadat to be offered the Nobel Peace Prize, it is possible that he will have to share the glory and the swag with Walter Cronkite, famed anchorman for the CBS news organisation. For Cronkite it was who actually propelled the Sadat trip into being, by interviewing the Egyptian President and Israeli Prime Minister Begin back-to-back on the evening news. It is surprising in retrospect, how long it took for the American networks to realise that, if international diplomacy in the Kissinger style was basically conducted in the interests of public relations, using public relations as an element of diplomatic manoeuvre, then why not dispense with the Secretary of State altogether and get a real media professional on the job.

Of course, when Kissinger was Secretary of State, there was less need for this since the fellow understood so clearly the requirements of television diplomacy. But his successor, Cyrus Vance, if a pre-McLuhanite throwback, who looks like a pickled frog on the screen and is visibly uncomfortable in the presence of reporters. Hence, as the chimera of the Geneva conference appeared ever more elusive, the sudden emergence of Cronkite and his colleagues on the centre of the stage. There could be a permanent reduction in the role of the State Department in the offing here. Both Kissinger and former President Ford are under contract to the NBC network and it seemed, over the last weekend, almost possible that ABC, the third network, had established a secret contractual agreement with Begin and Sadat. Begin made a particular point of wooing Barbara Walters, ABC's million-dollar-a-year news star; indeed it was Begin who organised Barbara Walters's simultaneous interview with himself and Sadat, overruling the latter's initial objections.

The dominance of the networks in international diplomacy may indeed, be only just beginning. Already this year interviews by Walters with Fidel Castro, and CBS's Mike Wallace with the Shah of Iran, have been events of major political importance;



and it is plain by their demeanour that many of the world's leaders grilled in this manner are well aware of the momentousness of the occasion. Diplomacy as 'spectacle' may well follow the route of the immensely successful Wide World of Sports' programmes broadcast each Saturday afternoon. 'Wide World of Diplomacy' could take Teng to address the Politbureau in Moscow, courtesy of Barbara Walters, or have Cronkite hustle a Law of the Sea Conference into settlement all in the course of an afternoon. The rhythms of the spectacle demand such rapid and dramatic resolution.

This, evidently, was the problem with the Sadat visit last weekend. Millions of Americans viewed the great adventure on their television sets as a narrative unfolding at satisfactory speed. Barely the invitation, than the acceptance; barely the arrival than the address; barely the address than the promise of an end to war. Then, with equal celerity, the departure and the triumphal return to Cairo of Sadat. The sequence had the tidiness and simplicity of an episode of *Kojak*. Content came a distant second to form. Twice as many people watched on television the arrival of Sadat's plane as viewed the proceedings in the Knesset.

The Carter Administration had some difficulty in accommodating itself to the demands of this dramatic simplicity. At first official reaction to the proposed trip was somewhat equivocal, with discreet cautions about excessive optimism and emphasis on the fundamental importance of negotiations at Geneva. There was irony here, since Carter is himself not insensible to the virtues of dramatic gestures. But the Administration has staked so much on a successful reconvening at Geneva that it was plainly aghast at the possibility that the Sadat venture would sabotage all possibility of success.

But almost within hours, responding to the tempo of public expectation, doubt was displaced by conspicuous enthusiasm and Carter was on the telephone to Sadat in one of those rhetorical phone calls (of which one would dearly like to read the actual transcript) telling him that 'the eyes of the world' were upon him.

The American Jewish community was equally, though very temperately, divided about the event. In the wake of Sadat's announcement that he was prepared to speak in the Knesset, and before Begin's invitation, a zealous supporter of Israel confessed to me his pessisism. After all, the ruins of the Lebanese village, in which a hundred or so people had died in the Israeli bombing raid, had been displayed only that on the morning front pages of the newspapers. Israeli intransigence seemed more starkly exposed than ever.

The visit changed utterly the rhythms of such adverse publicity. In the aftermath, however, my friend still expressed nervous gloom. Israel could no longer play its strongest and most enduring card – embattled isolation in a totally hostile geographical environment; the pressure was now on Begin to match Sadat's concession in making the trip at all; Carter's position *vis à vis* Begin had been greatly strengthened.

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Such ruminations can be heard with increasing frequency as a sense of reality slowly seeps back over the symbolism. While the spectacle was in full swing almost no one – aside from Arab and Palestinian delegates at the UN – was given much opportunity on the airwaves to express cynicism about the trip or indeed to discuss the political characters involved – most notably Sadat and Begin – in any but the most idealised terms. The spectacle seems to require an idiom of monotonic religiosity, accentuated by the constant respites for prayer by the protagonists. The very modest heckling by the Communists in the Knesset came as rudely as Stendhal's image of the entry of politics into a novel: pistol shots in a concert.

The power of the networks should once again be evoked in this context. The 'Anwar and Menachem Show' paralleled a much more protracted but equally compelling serial run by the networks last year: namely 'The Jimmy Saga', the story of how a country boy was taking Washington by storm and restoring a sense of decency, purpose and trust to the American people. Great ratings, slow decline. The ratings only picked up with a new twist to the story: Jimmy the failure, destined to be only a one-term President. It's boom or bust on the television screen, which is perhaps one reason why Begin or Sadat should be careful next time Cronkite calls them on the telephone. The Roman gladiators well knew that thumbs up or down was always a spot decision.

New York

Roger Omond

Inside and Outside the Inquest

Pretoria has more one-way streets and cul-de-sacs than government policy. So it takes some time and money to travel around South Africa's administrative capital (Cape Town is the parliamentary and Bloemfontein the legal capital: schizophrenia is also geographic). But hundreds of people are making the effort to get to Pretoria's Old Synagogue for the inquest into the death in detention of the founder of the Black Consciousness movement, Steve Biko.

In the time-honoured or mythologised way of journalists I got my first impressions of the sacred city of Pretoria from a taxi-driver. He was black (although the sign up on the phone booth said white drivers were available on request). I told him why I was in this bastion of Afrikanerdom. Eventually he said softly: 'Biko was a fine man.' A couple of other taxi-drivers haven't been so open to a total stranger as they puzzle their way through Pretoria's wide streets. Not that many people attending the inquest have used taxis or seen much of the jacaranda city: their attention is concentrated between the four walls of the Old Synagogue. The white election next Wednesday has been relegated to a side-show and even the government-supporting newspapers have been putting Biko all over page one. Those newspapers, the state-controlled radio and television and the Special Branch witnesses have been pushing a slightly different emphasis on the whole proceedings, of course. Their coverage has focussed on the 'crimes' of Steve Biko. What crimes? Well, he did drive through a stop sign once. And? Well, he was responsible for inflammatory pamphlets calling for blood in the streets. Says who? We do, say the Special Branch witnesses. And he was trying to form a united black political front including the banned African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress.

While the ANC and PAC must be quietly delighted to have regained some of the limelight, Biko's family and friends have had to sit through stomach-turning Special Branch evidence on how this gentle but resolute man of reconciliation was treated. Kept naked in a prison cell, handcuffed and chained by leg irons to a grille for more than 48 hours, slurring and incoherent apparently for days on end, naked for a 700-mile final journey where he was allowed to die in another prison cell.

And all the time we think: what were we doing on 6 and 7 September when he was being kept like a dangerous dog and when Mr Sydney Kentridge has submitted the fatal injuries were inflicted? Ironically, he was a prisoner in the Special Branch offices at the top of a life insurance firm, controlled by a man who has caused displeasure by saying that South Africa is well on the way to becoming a communist state. Dr Andreas Wassenaar, chairman of the Afrikaner Sanlam Company, may be a little confused on what communism is – he seems to be thinking of bureaucracy and state interference in private industry – but South African gallows humour wonders whether political detainees are offered life assurance policies on their way up to the top floors. Presumably not, or Sanlam could not make the profits it does.

Evidence of Special Branch treatment of detainees has come out often before. But this is one of the few times that the world's press, television and radio has been in court to see the procession of men march and mince their way into the witness box to tell their stories – stories that counsel for the Biko family are busy tearing into shreds. Exactly how and why Biko died may not become clear, despite the best efforts of the court. But the legal operation is being gone through, so doesn't that prove South Africa is a democratic state?

Many of those present don't see it that way. The blacks inside and outside court are defiant, despite the harassment and intimidation by the uniformed and Special Branch policemen. '*Amandla!*' (meaning 'Power') they cry during adjournments, 'one Azania, one nation'. The police do little to check the slogan-crying (technically illegal) of the now-banned Black People's Convention of which Biko was founder and honorary president. But the police watch and photograph most of the demonstrators and there is almost tangible antipathy between them and the forces of the law.

A quarter of a mile away in Church Square stands the statue of Paul Kruger, guarded by four statues of weary Boers armed with rifles and wearing bandoliers or kruithorings (cattle-horned shaped gunpowder containers and long the official emblem of the ruling National Party). Kruger, the symbol of defiance of the Boer Republics during the Boer war, gazes towards the street which bears his name and in which the Old Synagogue stands behind an ornate fence. He looks apprehensive. He has reason to be. The green lawns surrounding his statute are filled during the day by dozens, sometimes hundreds, of blacks – to the disquiet of the far right of Afrikaner power who can also hear the shouts of '*Amandla!*'.

Another Kruger must be wearing a worried frown – but at least he doesn't have a rotating squad of pigeons sitting on his head. James Thomas Kruger is Minister of Police at the moment and the man in charge of the Special Branch. For some hours last week it looked as if Kruger might be called into the witness box to explain how his initial versions of Biko's death differed so radically from those presented by the Special Branch to the inquest court. But Chief magistrate of Pretoria, Marthinus Prins who is hearing the inquest, quashed that line of legal inquiry.

So Kruger's statements were partially eliminated and the inquiry, in the words of the Biko family counsel, Sydney Kentridge, was partially stifled. But it's not all over yet. The crowd continues to come in the hope of more dramatic evidence and, as South Africa's best descriptive writer, John Ryan of the liberal *Rand Daily Mail*, said last week: 'Who wouldn't spend a week in this sauna for a Kentridge *v.* Kruger confrontation?'

It *has* been a sauna: too many people too little ventilation, unspeakable (almost literally) acoustics. Pretoria of course, is a hot place: possibly too hot for all those policemen having to undergo interrogation when they are more used to being the interrogators. They are less than enthusiastic as they face Kentridge's relentless cross-examination. There has been at least one Freudian error on the part of the Special Branch. Colonel Pieter Goosen, head of the Special Branch in Port Elizabeth where Biko was being detained, described one of his squads as the 'assaulting team' but embarrassedly corrected himself to say he meant 'interrogation team'. He grinned as he did it.

In the end (whenever that may be) it will be Magistrate Prins (who bears some resemblance to Jimmy Kruger who, in turn, looks very much like Henry Kissinger) who will give the formal finding on Biko's death. Depending on that finding, the Attorney-General of the Transvaal *could* decide on a prosecution. Pretoria is not the gambling capital of South Africa. But there are few prepared to lay odds that this inquest won't end up as one of Pretoria's cul-de-sacs.

Pretoria

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John Hatfield

The Grand Energy Debate

When the OPEC countries had the audacity in 1973 to jerk up oil prices to about the level that they would have reached long before in a free market, energy as a subject emerged from the offices of technical specialists. It became topical, exciting, emotive: for businessmen, ecologists and journalists. Ever since then, energy has waxed and waned in newsworthiness, but has not lost one paradoxical attraction, as those responsible for producing the different fuels are increasingly attacked for ignorance and fanaticism by a new profession: that of Energy Critics.

There is nothing so emotive as engineering plans and blueprints. Nevertheless, despite public quarrels, a curious relationship is developing between the energy planners and their critics: something like that of the criminal fraternity and the police, but perhaps more like that of actors and playwrights with drama critics. The difference is that the new energy critics are not employed by the media: they either represent the new pressure groups, or are free-ranging amateurs. Collectively they have already begun to influence conventional wisdoms and therefore to some extent the thought-processes if not the decisions of the energy planners themselves.

This is largely because the energy critics are arguing chiefly from the ecological standpoint, which even ten years ago was a bit of a lovable joke, but now is the new morality. This does not mean that the energy critics are necessarily right. The Grand Energy Debate, even where it involves unquantifiable values and strong passions, is being conducted largely in terms of figures, and energy critics are often extremely well-informed about particular aspects of this complex subject. Unfortunately, however, because the scripts and the counterblasts are so many and so strong, when presented live they do not clarify but confuse. There is plenty of sound, plenty of drama, banana skins and sharp stilettos in plenty, but no one plot. It might be helpful, therefore, to try to pull the key issues together into some rough shape, in terms of what is known, what is possible and what is likely.

In this country, a good deal of the argument has centred around the timing, scale, and ways of filling a possible gap around the end of this century between UK-produced energy and the demand for it. Thanks to North Sea oil of course, over the next ten years at least, this country will be almost unique in the West in having not an energy gap, but an energy glut. There is sharp disagreement, however, over what happens thereafter: will there be massive new finds of hydrocarbons, how fast can wave, wind or solar power be developed, and how much of our vast coal reserves can we dig out? It is common ground that, taking a longer timescale and looking at the world as a whole, all energy will get increasingly dear and scarce from now onwards as the limits to new fossil finds are neared, and as the Third World struggles to develop.

The really hot argument however is blazing around what to believe about two rates of change that jointly will determine demand: economic growth and the reduction in its dependence on energy. In rival scenarios the rival views are acted out with brilliance and passion, and we shall all be involved in the result.

The energy critics are no doubt performing as legitimately as claque-masters when they focus applause or hisses on the details that are dramatic to them rather than on the action as a whole. But the critics are also themselves authors and actors in a kind of Theatre of Confrontation. Here it is they who are open to criticism when they imply that dramatic savings in energy are possible at little sacrifice, or indeed merely by finding biases in other people's forecasts.

In all this, what guidance is there? The Department of Energy has recently published *Working Document for Energy Policy No 1* for Tony Benn's new Energy Commission. On 28 November the Commission's members will discuss it: heads of energy industries and representatives of trade unions, big business and public interests. The document sets out at length but inconclusively the broad main options for policy, and in much detail a 'Reference Scenario' up to the magic year 2000. This scenario accepts the National Coal Board's optimistic output expectations, judges that novel energy, although pushed ahead vigorously, can contribute little in the period, and assumes a very low nuclear power programme. On this thinking, it concludes that in 2000 we shall need about 20 per cent more primary energy than we can produce. Nearly half of the shortfall would be met by imports – probably oil – roughly equal to present North Sea production. This would leave a 'Policy Gap' of fuel needed for power stations: 50 million tons of coal equivalent, about half the present total electricity fuel burn. The 'Policy Gap' could be filled only by yet more imports (at a time when pressure is really building up on world supplies), by an even bigger UK coal ouput than the NCB's targets – or by more nuclear. Otherwise the projected economic growth rate of 3 per cent per year (slightly faster than the post-war average) could not be achieved, as is shown in an alternative scenario.

The main Department of Energy economic assumption is, of course, contrary to the more ambitious hopes of some of the energy critics, in that it assumes no dramatic changes in our way of life. It has, however, already been criticised as too pessimistic by the TUC, and all the political parties are in effect committed by implication to at least that level of economic growth in the 1990s by their promises for the late 1970s and the 1980s. In other words, the Department of Energy's conventional view of the economic outlook reflects the expectations of the great bulk of the population. The Grand Energy Debate in fact hinges on this: by what criteria should we judge what is desirable and what is necessary? Bound up in the decisions about energy are decisions about whether an industrial society will remain the norm over the next generation or so.

The energy critics, together with some of the planners, fall into highly articulate but overlapping groups on these topics:

(1) The Coal Use Maximisers see salvation in Britain's enormous reserves of coal, and new uses for it, as a feedstock for synthetic oil, substitute natural gas and the chemicals on which we increasingly depend.

(2) The Nuclear Enthusiasts counter that coal can hardly maintain its present output. They proclaim nuclear as the only 'new' primary energy that can be mobilised with certainty within the next 50 years, and as the only guarantee that our industrial society can continue.

(3) For the Oil and Gas Everywhere Believers, UK and world resources of hydrocarbons have been dramatically under-estimated, and indeed their size concealed for commercial and political reasons.

(4) The Conservation Maximisers reject an energy gap as the product of blinkered thinking. Instead, they want to proceed by 'soft' paths: conservation and the new energy sources. However both of these require extremely hard measures to make them possible.

(5) The Anti-Technologists and Low Economic Growth Advocates overlap with the last group. At its best, their case is simply that living standards, in the industrial and Third World alike, can be improved only through a more intelligent rather than a bigger use of resources.

Much of the emotion in the public debate centres on coal versus nuclear. By comparison with, say, France and Germany, the feeling about nuclear power in the UK population as a whole is still remarkably calm, perhaps because we started to develop nuclear so soon after the war, seeing it (much as North Sea oil now) as the new short cut to prosperity. Just lately however, the Windscale Planning Inquiry has brought to a head very strong new feelings about nuclear. These are coloured in particular by considerable fears about plutonium, on which as uranium becomes scarce nuclear power may need to rely, using fast reactors that 'breed' more plutonium than they consume. There is fear of the dangers to health and freedom of a kind quite new to our experience, and fear at the difficulty of making correct decisions. The TUC, on the other hand, in their recent statement to the Energy Commission, have called for an early decision to build a commercial fast breeder reactor. The Department of Energy has merely stressed the need to ensure that 'fast reactor technology will be available to us when we may need it' possibly in collaboration with other countries or even by

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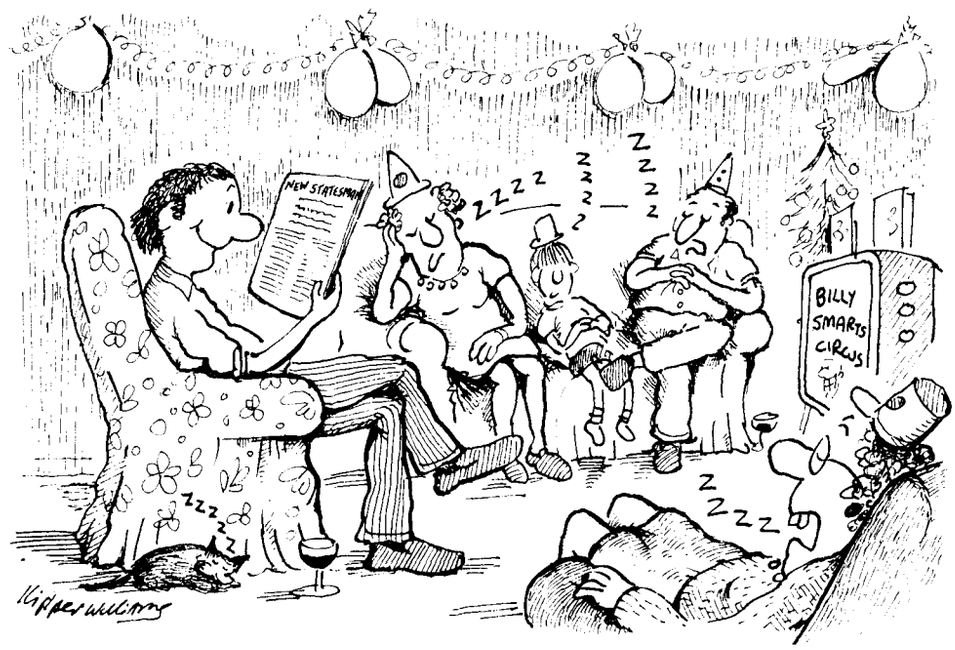
letting them make the pace. Meanwhile, the question is left open, while 'fully satisfactory answers' are sought, probably with the help of a special new inquiry.

The Electricity Supply Industry is not only subject to the Nuclear Health Inspectorate. It is bound by law to meet demand with regard to environment and safety. But also it must meet demand reliably and economically. From this stems a fact that might almost seem new, so often obscured is it in the Grand Energy Debate: there is a humane and respectable case for nuclear development. This does not rely on attempting to prove an energy gap in the UK in this century, but on considerations of cost and of the optimum use of energy resources overall. Despite arguments about the merits of particular reactor types, moderate nuclear supporters stress that electricity from those now proven is substantially cheaper than electricity based on coal, and will probably get cheaper still in real terms. A fixation on the year 2000 obscures the fast-growing problems thereafter, when novel energy may start to contribute handsomely, but when fossil fuels will be far too scarce and valuable to be burned in power stations. Nuclear electricity is the only near prospect for freeing on a big scale those increasingly precious hydrocarbons and especially coal, for example for export to the enormous fuel-hungry markets of Europe (now too tied to OPEC) and to feed premium uses in UK homes and industry. Any nuclear stations needed in the early 1990s must be ordered from the early 1980s. On all these grounds, closing the options now against a moderate nuclear development would be a decision not quickly reversible, and would probably pre-ordain a serious misuse of natural resources.

Tony Benn set up the Energy Commission to canalise and give a focus to the Grand Energy Debate. Despite a sceptical reception at first, he may yet prove that the Commission, although not intended to recommend detailed decisions, is a beneficial as well as an imaginative innovation. Meanwhile, the Commission is bound to provide good theatre. Stately Corneille drama on stage with the interplay of known interests and declared passions. Off-stage, some public catharsis and no little alienation, with much of the intellectual content as well as the excitement undoubtedly provided from the body of the hall by the interventions of the energy critics. But their views, as those of the planners, are based on forecasts, and the dangers of confusing assumptions, judgments and what is considered desirable are particularly acute. For example, a conservation maximising Britain would require considerable efforts and expenditure: i.e. doing massively without other things.

In the many decisions needed, the choice is not in fact between some brutish technology on the one hand and life-enhancing progress on the other. Those of us who most desire a more rational society and who believe the world to be at a major historical turning point, must be the first to abstain from critic-needling or planner-bashing, and argue our cases with as much hard-edged austerity as conviction. The cases themselves, and the public, deserve it.



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L. John Collins*

What I Meant About Strikers

In the 1930s I became a supporter of the Labour movement and called myself a Christian Socialist. In the years that led up to the second world war, I saw the wretched poverty, the unemployment and the cruel exploitation of vast numbers of the workers of this country. I was aware of the sympathy of sections of the business world and some members of the so-called upper classes for the rising Fascist and Nazi dictatorships.

Labour was the political party that espoused, realistically, the cause of the underprivileged and the oppressed. In its origins it was deeply influenced by the Christian ethic with its emphasis upon compassion. The party struggled for social and economic justice; and in this struggle I admired and supported the crucial role of the trade unions. It was a struggle for the liberation of the working people from the crippling effects of poverty and insecurity, the opening up of opportunity and a fuller richer life for all.

Respect for human life is the touchstone by which, I believe, the actions and policies of governments, of public bodies, as well as individuals must be judged. 'This expression', I said in St Pauls, 'is often understood simply as an injunction against the taking of life . . . I regard it as well as the giving of scope, as far as is possible, for every human being to live his or her life to the maximum of its potential. Every exploitation of human beings is an infringement of the Christian injunction to respect life'.

Since the 1930's very much good has been accomplished. But I am not alone in becoming somewhat disillusioned by the actions of successive Labour governments, both at home and abroad, and by the attitudes and actions of some trade unions and their members. There is one particular form of disrespect for human life that is becoming increasingly widespread and apparently increasingly acceptable. I fear that some trade unions and some workers are succumbing to callous methods of pursuing their own interests.

During the war the Germans developed a vile practice of murdering and threatening helpless, uninvolved people, women and children among them, in efforts to intimidate or get information about resistance fighters. Since then we have seen the growth of terrorism, the kidnapping and threatening of individuals, the hijacking of aeroplane-loads of unfortunate victims. Far too many people have come to accept that there may be some justification for this kind of blackmail provided the cause is good enough. 'They have no alternative,' they say 'there is nothing else they can do to draw attention to their plight.' This, in my view, is a collapse of anything that I understand by morality and humanity.

It may seem unfair to associate the electrical power-workers with organisations like the PLO or the Baader-Meinhof gang. In pursuit of their demands terrorists do actually murder people, whereas strikers are prepared only to let them die. But morally I cannot see any great difference between the two attitudes; both are inhuman and unacceptable forms of blackmail.

I was concerned in my sermon in St Pauls with the unofficial go-slow of electrical power-workers which brought suffering and real danger to those least able to withstand it – to the sick, the disabled, the old and the children. Now we have a firemen's strike – in many ways a more serious affair, since this is an official strike and no one can deny that the firemen have a good case for special treatment. But I believe that the same principle must apply. When human lives are at stake a strike is not just, in Mr Howard's words last week, 'a specific conflict between employers and employees'.

Mr Howard seems to suggest that there is something wrong in saying to the strikers: 'What if a child dies as a result of your strike?' On the contrary, I believe that this question is a question that should be asked repeatedly; it is a responsibility the firemen cannot evade and, to their very great credit, many of them have not evaded it, and have left the picket lines in order to save life. But it is no good saying as strikers usually do: 'Of course, we regret the inconvenience, hardship, suffering, danger to the public, but it is not our responsibility, we have no alternative.' This is just not true; they have the alternatives of pressing their claims by other means, or of waiting, as others have to do, for the next phase of an incomes policy.

Of course, there is economic hardship. I see plenty of it, especially among people unable to strike and unprotected by powerful trade unions. But economic hardship is not at all the same kind of thing as real poverty, virtual starvation, children without shoes or proper clothing, old people dying of cold and hunger, all of which I saw in the 1930s. No cause can justify the deaths of innocent, uninvolved people: certainly not the cause of 'economic hardship' in 1977 in Britain with its welfare state, its social security benefits and its dangerous inflation.

Isn't it bad luck on those in professions that involve the safeguarding of human life and health? Yes it is, and I have always thought that doctors, nurses, police, firemen, lifeboatmen, to mention only some, ought to be specially treated, though I notice that the TUC does not regard the firemen as 'a special case'. But the workers I have mentioned are all responsible men and women; they joined their professions in full awareness of the responsibilities involved, and short of leaving the job, they have no moral right to contract out of these responsibilities.

Public indignation with strikers who are prepared to put lives at risk is genuine; it does not need to be whipped up. What, of course, is wicked and irresponsible are attempts to incite the public to retaliatory actions against strikers. This is also blackmail; it reinforces my conviction that too many people have become infected by a general blunting of moral sensibility; many are too ready to believe that the suffering of the helpless can somehow be justified in pursuit of an interest or a cause.

I find the rest of Mr Howard's argument very strange. He accepts that there is overwhelming public support for the policy of pay restraint but chides Mr Callaghan for, as he puts it 'choosing to rely on public opinion'. But we are supposed to be living in a democracy and the wishes and well-being of the majority of ordinary people are supposed to be something that democratic governments don't just ride over rough-shod; it is the dictatorships of Left and Right which do that!

This is one aspect of the present situation that alarms me most. When it comes to pushing through their own ideology or their own wage claims, too many people in the Labour movement and too many powerful unions seem to have forgotten their democratic roots and their concern for the public good. They seem to have forgotten that all truly democratic institutions must rest upon consent, upon responsible freedom and upon respect for individual human beings. This development within the Labour movement is, to me, one of its more ugly and unacceptable faces.

Canon Collins is Treasurer and Canon Residentiary of St Paul's Cathedral.

Roger Woddis

Neurocommunism

Dr David Owen has warned the Labour Party against Eurocommunism.

When each word he thundered
  Was met with applause,
I listened and wondered,
  Then bolted the doors;
And thoughts medieval
  Invaded my brain –
A face of pure evil
  Was pressed to the pane!

I woke in the morning
  With sweat on my brow;
His ominous warning
  Is haunting me now.
The words that were spoken
  Are worms in my head,
My spirit is broken,
  My feet are like lead.

But let us not falter
  Or lower our guard;
Revision may alter
  The face on the card,
But Lenin when lenient
  Still makes the blood freeze –
How most inconvenient
  That Moscow agrees!

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Audrey Harvey

Kate's Case

That pretty-crop-haired Kate had an address in Queen Anne Street was rather deceptive. She was a cleaner to a firm of accountants on the four upper floors. And it was by virtue of this job that she and Bruno had for three years inhabited the cavernous basement ('a proper old slum') with its corkscrew iron steps from the street and its outdoor WC – which they would now have to leave. Just another service tenancy it had seemed, typical of the lusher areas of London, with no security for the worker after the job ends, no defence to merit legal aid, and therefore no one to protect Kate's interests on, for instance, costs. What suddenly transformed things was to find that the official conciliation service, ACAS, was involved. In coming to the protection of a single, non-union, semi-domestic worker it had inadvertently raised a whole bunch of important issues.

A successful plaintiff in a county court, as Kate's landlord was ultimately bound to be, has a right to claim costs, the principle being, as Mr Justice Bristow recently emphasised in the Court of Appeal, to deter 'irresponsible litigation'. This means that the outgoing tenant or worker facing a possession order can be penalised because, in law, he could not win; and he is still liable even if he is being removed (as Kate was) solely for his landlord's convenience and can demonstrate (as she could) not having deliberately stayed on after being given notice to leave. The fact that the tenant's own expenses – removal and storage for instance, let alone compensation for loss of his home – are irrelevant is accepted in the sense that no one makes a fuss about it. There is usually no one there to speak for the tenant when, in a matter of moments, an order for costs is made and the proceedings closed. Kate's case, however, was strikingly unusual in that although her employment had been terminated, it had not been done fairly. To be sacked for expecting a baby – her second since the job began – nowadays always constitutes unfair dismissal. When Kate learned at a rights centre that she could appeal to a tribunal and guilelessly mentioned this to her usually smooth-tongued employer, he shouted 'What bastard's put you up to this?' and offered her £20 as settlement.

ACAS thought £300 a more reasonable figure and would have gone much higher but for certain snags: this was not the same firm which had first employed Kate, so continuous employment for two years was going to be disputable. And how to prove that a lone cleaner has done the necessary 16 hours work a week? In view of all this, and because maternity pay under the Employment Protection Act would not become payable for another two months, a barrister advising the rights centre (but who was professionally barred from acting for Kate either before a tribunal or a

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court) settled for £250. This settlement, however, also provided for her to stay on, rent free, for two months after the baby was born, in all nearly six months. So an industrial agreement can now bestow security of tenure – the Rent Acts notwithstanding.

This rather remarkable situation could have become more remarkable still if Kate's advisers had pushed her right (in force since June last year) to have her job back and, therefore to keep her home indefinitely. But, even without this additional twist, her case – one might have thought – was sufficiently important to merit legal aid. Alas, in company with just about 75 per cent of families, Kate was too well-off to qualify. It wasn't merely that, having sweated for years in kitchens and laundries to get themselves a deposit for a house with a garden, she and her husband Bruno had now amassed £1,600, thus exceeding the then legal aid limit. Their income was also too high. True, Kate's pay had been only £8 a week, but legal aid for wives is not separately assessed unless they need it to oppose their husbands; and Bruno, an underpaid cook in a seedy steakhouse, brought home another £50 to £55. As for the settlement money, they had not yet got it.

As soon as Kate's security of tenure ran out, the landlord applied for an expedited hearing of his claim for possession of the basement, and a bare fortnight now intervened. For non-lawyers asked to assist in such emergencies there are many handicaps. But the chief one – how to confront the legal closed shop – is not quite as intimidating as it seems. A non-lawyer who, in principle, cannot be allowed to address the court, can be called as a witness as long as his non-client can be successfully coached to ask the right questions (which Kate could not). It was also permissible to prompt Kate in whispers. But as her soft voice was going to be inaudible anyway and her answers liable to be rambling and quite off the point, it eventually happened (as it usually does) that being on hand to 'assist the court' meant being invited to speak for her.

In this case it seemed best to beard counsel for the other side privately on a matter that affects all outgoing service occupiers whose accommodation was rent free: how much is to be charged from the time the job ends until the bailiff arrives, before which unforseeable date it was the local authority's rule not even to provide bed-and-breakfast lodgings. In Kate's case a cool £20 a week was being claimed. However, on the evidence of local fair rents, this was knocked down to £12.50 – the speed and ease of the operation alone showing how necessary some kind of representation is. In other similar cases the number of weeks for which such 'mesne profits' are claimed – surely a term designed to obscure the issue – has been found to be excessive by as much as £80. Who is going to vet a landlord's claim if the tenant is unrepresented?

The judge, who very strangely held that all local authorities are 'bound by law' to rehouse anyone who has to leave his home, said he would speed things up for all concerned by giving an immediate possession order. No doubt a solicitor acting for Kate would have objected that such an order, chiefly used for squatters, not only empowers a bailiff to turn a family out at once but makes this impossible to prevent. In face of this new emergency the local authority did an instant *volte face* and produced in another part of London an unfurnished basement as temporary shelter – which was fine, except that it would mean, eventually, two furniture removals at anything up to £100 each. Worse, now more than a month later Kate still has not got her £250. She had always felt that to be paid for having a baby couldn't be right. Like everything else there must be a catch in it. She had been afraid to sign.

Donald Gould

Scanners and the People of Siam

EMI, the British conglomerate which makes everything electrical from music centres to the brains of satellites has just announced with pride the sale of a second EMI-Scanner to Siam. The order is valued at over £300,000. The scanner is a technological marvel. It uses X-rays and a big black box of computerised tricks to paint pictures of cross-sections of the body which show up organs and tissues with a hundred times more clarity than ordinary X-ray photographs. The first machines, which came into use in 1971, were designed to detect tumours of the brain and other abnormalities inside the head. They were followed, a year later, by instruments capable of scanning the entire body. Using the scanner it is possible to demonstrate the presence, say, of certain cancers, far sooner than by other means, and without causing the patient any discomfort or distress.

Earnings from sales have reached £165m. and there are a further £50m. on the order book. Unfortunately only a handful of the 8-900 machines so far produced have been installed in British hospitals. We can't afford them. BUPA, the nation's largest private health insurance group, has one of them at its London medical screening centre, and NHS patients can be sent there for a quick scan, for which the Government pays a suitable fee.

Some 80 per cent of the output of these costly, if wondrous, instruments has gone to the US, where the fees which can be charged for the performance of the latest medical conjuring tricks make the necessary heavy capital investment a practical proposition. Scanning has swept America since the first two machines were installed in 1973, and since then 760 have been sold to US hospitals and doctors. But, earlier this year, a report from the US National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine called for an evaluation of this new and extremely expensive diagnostic technique. The report reflected a growing doubt over the wisdom of devoting an ever larger slice of finite resources to high technology in medicine at the expense of basic health care, pointing out that a scanner not only costs $700,000 to buy, but also over half that sum again each year to run. One trouble is that many of the faults of the flesh pin-pointed by these machines can't be very effectively treated even after they have been discovered.

Yet, if there are doubts about the value for money to be had out of high performance apparatus such as the EMI-Scanner in a country as rich as the US, how about Siam? In the early 1970s the doctor-patient ratio in that country was 15 per 100,000. A high proportion of the medical care is provided by midwives and semi-skilled or traditional practitioners. Eminently preventable illnesses, including mismanaged pregnancies and childbirth, and infections in children, are the principal causes of death. There is one doctor to every 800 members of the population in the capital city, but only one to every 25,000 in the rest of the country. There is a medical school which provides a high level of training in medicine of the western, scientific, curative kind (after all, the Siam General Hospital in Bangkok now has *two* EMI-Scanners), but almost 70 per cent of Thailand's new medical graduates emigrate in order to enjoy the richer pickings to be had from practice in the developed world.

But there's nothing exceptionally rotten in the state of Thailand. The governments of most of the developing nations now pay lip service to the concept of what Dr Halfdan Mahler, Director-General of the World Health Organisations, calls 'health justice', which means organising the distribution of the resources available for health care in such a way that the greatest benefits are received by those most in need. However, countries can vote one way at the World Health Assembly, while acting differently at home.

'It is a regrettable fact,' said Dr Mahler earlier this year, 'that many countries, developed and developing, still allocate up to three-quarters of their health expenditures to highly sophisticated, disease-oriented institutional care of individual patients in the capital cities, leaving large parts of their populations underserved, if they are served at all, by primary health care.'

A famous multi-storey hospital in Addis Ababa stands empty because, after it had been built, it was found that it would cost more than the entire health budget of the country to staff it properly. Malcolm Potts, reporting on some of the high-technology medical establishments in India, and noting that Calcutta owns two intensive care units for coronary thrombosis, while there are 2 million people in the city's slums with barely a sewer between them, describes the set-up as 'a case of diamonds in the cow-dung'. Perhaps EMI should wonder whether that is not what they have done in Bangkok.

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London Diary

☐ Long ago, when the present Labour government came to office, I had a conversation with a prominent Labour lawyer. It's not in the nature of lawyers to get excited but there was, let's say, a sparkle in his eye, even a certain brightness in his tone. Provided it survived – and at the time that was doubtful – this Labour government, he said, ought at least to be able to do something about the judiciary. With luck, it ought to find itself appointing not just a new Master of the Rolls (Lord Denning was even then 75) but a new LCJ as well (and making, he hoped, a better job of it than the Attlee government with Lord Goddard). Heigh-ho for those hopes. Lord Denning, now 78, shows not the least intention of budging and the same goes for Lord Widgery. Indeed the present LCJ, like Lord Parker before him, is said to be determined to hang on in the hope that his successor can be a Tory-appointee. And not only an appointee but very much a Tory candidate to boot. Now who could that be? The specification would seem to fit the outgoing Conservative MP for Epsom, Sir Peter Rawlinson. True, he has also been canvassed as a possible Tory Lord Chancellor – but the glory of giving him the short straw on that one would be that then Mrs Thatcher could have a Tory Lord Chancellor *and* a Tory LCJ as well. No wonder Labour's law officers are going around looking a bit depressed.

☐ Not that I'm in much of a mood to commiserate with them – or indeed with the present Lord Chancellor. Even if it can't do much about legal appointments, one would have thought a Labour government would at least try and do something about law reform. Not a bit of it. The present Lord Chancellor's office has become a veritable graveyard of all proposals for reforming the law. Mr Justice Faulks – who, I see, retires this week – produced three years ago a thorough-going report on the law of defamation: I didn't agree with all the proposals that he and his committee recommended but the cumulative case they made for amendments to the present law was pretty unanswerable. Lord Justice Phillimore and his committee did the same with the law of contempt – but again there has been no action. Add to that the Younger Report on Privacy, the Franks Report on Official Secrecy – and it begins to look as if sitting on the woolsack is a positive invitation to inertia even for Labour Lord Chancellors.

☐ If I were a striking fireman who heard on the radio why my *Daily Mirror* hadn't been on sale, I think I'd feel pretty sick about its journalists' demand for a *rise* of £60 a week, not to mention allowances, special expenses etc. (including £5 a week for domestic disruption caused by office telephone calls) that could add anything from £20 to £100 to that sum. I'd feel even more cynical about society's evaluation of my worth to the community if I found out why the Mirror Group journalists wanted a rise that is bigger than a fireman's take-home pay. They say it's because they'll have to adapt to the new printing technology the Mirror Group is introducing over the next six months. This is eyewash, of course. Only a handful of the 475 journalists in the Group will be even remotely involved with the new computerised techniques. The real cause is that management has had to buy the typesetters' union rule book in order to get the National Graphical Association to accept a 50 per cent cut in manning and the end of piece rates – at a price. That price is £12,000 cash payment per NGA man and a *minimum* wage of £174 a week for a job that could be done by a competent typist. Journalists have a long and justifiable grievance that typesetters and other technical workers take home more pay than most of their editorial colleagues. The Mirror journalists' average salary is £145 a week, so the typesetters can now earn more than the news editor, a key figure on the paper. So it's not surprising that the militants in the *Mirror* chapel are not young Lefties but the older senior sub-editors. It's a measure of the mess Fleet Street is in that to modernise its outdated technology it has not merely to prolong but to reinforce its outdated – and outrageous – pay structure.

☐ BBC Radio 3 deserves a real pat on the back for the series that is finishing on Sunday on the American involvement in Vietnam. Entitled *Many Reasons Why* it's been a model demonstration of what broadcasting can do in terms of contemporary history. Even Marshall Ky, now a liquor-store owner in California, came across with a certain dignity last Saturday night – even if it was that of a Biggles long after his time; oddly, though, one man, the producer (Anthony Moncrieff) was not able to lure to the microphone was Marshal Thieu – though he is, I believe, alive and well and living in Surrey. My own favourite passage in all the 11 programmes came, however, not from the Vietnam end but from the American one. The seventh programme had J. K. Galbraith paying a remarkable tribute to Senator Eugene McCarthy as 'the man who deserves more credit than anybody else for bringing our involvement in the war to an end'. Alas, the same programme also included an interview with McCarthy himself – saying inimitably: 'I think the war would have ended just the way it did even if we had not made our protest in 1968.' That's Gene McCarthy for you: he doesn't in the least mind being a martyr but he's damned if he's going to allow anyone to make him into a hero.

☐ I hear disturbing news about H. P. Koirala, the Nepalese socialist leader, whose predicament was described by Mervyn Jones in this Diary (NS 7 October). Koirala was then making a brief stop in this country on his way back to Nepal. Midway through his trial on a treason charge which carries the death penalty, he had become dangerously ill and been released on ticket-of-leave to have an operation in America; he then made the courageous decision to return. I'm now informed that he is in an ordinary prison for common criminals – you can imagine what that's like in Nepal – although during previous spells of detention he had been treated as a political prisoner. Koirala is 65 years old and still in precarious health. I wouldn't put it past the King, whose humane qualities are roughly on a par with those of the Shah of Iran and President Pinochet, to entertain the hope that Koirala will quietly expire and obviate the need for trial and sentence.

☐ It's already got to the stage in America where if you pay for anything (a hotel bill, an air fare, even a restaurant 'check') with cash, you're regarded as a criminal – or at least as someone having links too close for comfort with the underworld. In this country, though, you're more victim than villain. Twice lately I've found myself at railway booking offices immediately behind someone proudly flourishing a credit card instead of bank notes. The resulting endless palaver – signature, roll-stamp, tissue paper receipt – takes at a cautious estimate three times as long as a simple monetary transaction: long enough anyway on the second occasion to make me miss my train. And yet booking offices all carry notices soliciting for credit card customers. It's high time we of the old brigade mobilised ourselves – and, while we're at it, we might as well throw in the banks too. The worst start for the day I know is patiently to wait in line in what looks like the shortest queue before a bank teller's counter – only to be ambushed by the chap in front paying in his entire week's takings and then going on to organise his small change cash 'float' for the weekend as well. Is is really so daunting a matter for banks to have both 'private' and 'trade' counters? Or are they all in the credit card, anti-cash plot, too?

Crucifer

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ A triangular wreath inscribed 'Gays against fascism' and made of pink carnations, recalling the symbol of the pink triangle which was used by the Nazis to categorise homosexuals in concentration camps, was laid by a committee of All London Gay Groups. They were turned away at first by a police chief superintendent who told them: 'It's not because you're gay, it's the fascism I object to. This is a solemn and serious occasion, it is not political.' – *Guardian* (C. Ligota)

☐ Thieves have stolen a gold-plated lavatory and the rest of a £1,500 bathroom suite leaving the water gushing for five hours at the home of Mrs Susan Shaw in Cawthorne, near Barnsley, South Yorks. A police spokesman commented: 'It is an unusual theft. Gold-plated fittings are not as common as the normal type in Barnsley.' – *Daily Telegraph* (G. M. Moger)

☐ 'But it certainly was not the picture the whole time I was there,' Dr Terence Lawlor told an inquiry into conditions at the Normansfield Hospital, Teddington, Middlesex. He agreed that patients so lacked stimulation that one morning they were seen watching a television test card. Another morning Dr Lawlor said he found them watching an Open University programme on Einstein's theory of relativity. 'I changed it to a cartoon,' he added. – *Daily Telegraph* (F. C. Holroyd)

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University Forum

Julian Eccles and Alun Roberts

Warwick University Ltd

'We recommend to Council and to Senate that the Finance Committee is invited in conjunction with the finance office and the university brokers to reconstruct its investment portfolio accordingly and to take steps to withdraw its account from Barclays Bank' – so ran the functional motion passed at last week's meeting of the university council, the supreme governing body, at the 'business' university of Warwick. The recommendation, for once, was nothing to do with business. The reconstruction of the portfolio specifically involved the withdrawal of £90,000 from South African firms, principally Courtaulds, Shell Transport, British American Tobacco and Rio Tinto Zinc. In addition the moral equivocation over apartheid of Barclays had finally lost it £12m., its biggest university account.

This is not something that started with Mr Vorster's and Mr Kruger's repression on 18 October 1977. For the past five years students in Britain had been campaigning for their colleges and universities to 'disinvest' from companies who have subsidiaries in South Africa, and where they have an account with Barclays to withdraw it. Surprisingly for the cuckoo-land of student politics, nearly all factions have supported the aims of this campaign; only a small element of the Federation of Conservative Students continue to embarrass their leadership by opposing it vocally. Altogether more difficult is finding out how far universities have their hands in the apartheid till. For one thing, it is a wearisome task. Few university bursaries think the university's business is the students' business. Investments are moved around from week to week and, to be realistic, searching through Companies House involves hiring full-time research officers if you are to disentangle the subsidiaries of a Unilever. A year ago *Sennet*, the London University newspaper, surveyed a rough cross-section of universities and estimated that over £250m. was directly invested in South Africa by academia's accountants – a conservative estimate if you consider that Manchester University alone has £25m. and the Cambridge colleges anything from £100m. to £200m.

The disinvestment campaign was given its main impetus after the joint publication in 1974 by the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Haslemere Group of an impressive looking booklet called *Barclays and South Africa*. The argument against Barclays is that it is more vital to South Africa's world links than any other bank. One in five of Barclay's branches worldwide are located in South Africa; it is the largest banking concern in the Republic. The Barclays parent company has a controlling share (65 per cent) of Barclays (SA) and will continue to do so despite the Republic's Frazen Commission which requires foreign banks to reduce their shareholdings to 50 per cent within ten years. The number of Barclays branches have tripled in South Africa between 1950 and 1970 and in 1976 when South African companies and their government were finding it increasingly difficult to borrow funds Barclays expressed their confidence in Vorster by producing $338m. in loans, a third of the year's capital inflows.

As far as students' campaigning priorities are concerned, the disinvestment issue has not ranked very high in the mind of the student activist. Fighting foreign issues is regarded nowadays as futile and self-indulgent. However there have been pockets of 'mass campaigning', as the NUS would have it. The first success came in 1975 when Lancaster withdrew its total holdings worth £5,000 from South African companies. Last year the momentum built up. Bath University disinvested £80,000 immediately after the arrival of a new vice-chancellor, Loughborough took out £20,000 and Wolfson College, Oxford around £50,000. Hull are to decide very shortly through a referendum of all students and staff. Earlier this year students at Aberdeen organised a fortnight's occupation over the university's investment in 16 different companies. At least 11 other university bursaries have faced criticism in committees or on pickets.

Barclays are beginning to feel nervous. In 1976 the bank was stung into responding by producing plush anti-NUS leaflets. Local managers were instructed by Head Office publicly to debate the banks policy with student union officials. The idea was hastily shelved as the managers floundered to defend the indefensible. Barclays then withdrew to the quieter ambience of expense account restaurants to dissuade student leaders – an uphill task at a time when Barclays were purchasing £6.5m. worth of South African defence bonds.

In the case of Warwick, the most significant victory so far, the disinvestment campaign has been spread over 18 months and involved a joint staff and student petition, stickers, badges, meetings, pickets, the hard work of preparing submissions to university committees and sub-committees and, of course ceaseless lobbying. Outside support was enlisted from local MPs, churches and other organisations. The Bishop of Coventry was encouraged to toe the World Council of Churches line. A telegram was sent from the London office of the African National Congress. In a series of amendments the opposition, led by Professor Schwarzenberg, persistently claimed that changing banks was mere tokenism; other banks such as Midland and National Westminster have shares in apartheid. The vice-chancellor, Jack Butterworth, had a more direct argument. The cost of moving banks (£2,000) was too expensive.

Last year, the university's finance and general purposes committee supported what was then just a student campaign, but its decision was quickly overturned by Council which is heavily populated by town councillors and businessmen from establishments like Massey Ferguson and, inevitably, Barclays Bank. Having been blocked down one path we won the support of academics' Assembly. Once the university narrowly ratified the minutes from Assembly all the Council could do was either to divorce themselves from the university, whose major representative bodies had now all supported the campaign and vote against or bow to the feeling by either abstaining or supporting it too. The latter course was taken by ten votes to eight with a host of abstentions. The case had been won by the noble art of persuasion. Some of the Warwick Socialist Workers' Party who had consistently maintained the campaign could only be won by an occupation appeared visibly upset, even disappointed. Disinvestment by British universities may not be as significant as the collapse of Angola – but it helps.

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Maids of Honour

During the war, and passing in uniform through a succession of officers' messes on my way up the military ladder to a rather doubtfully useful stardom as a Lt.-Col. in the Intelligence Corps, I always had a lurking fear that some evening, after dinner and during ha-ha-ha-time over the port, I should be required, by bluff old Brigadier Bimbo, to produce a dirty joke. It was not prudishness that worried me but the fact that I knew none. It is always assumed that anybody who is connected, however distantly, with the world of entertainment, has a merry fund of such tales at command. This is not correct. The only things of the sort that I could ever remember were entirely feeble and muddled riddles ('Why did Sir Adrian Boult?' 'Because he saw the salad dressing'), and I knew better than to parade such milk-and-water stuff before moustachioed Majors. But as it turned out, jokes of a lewd kind, and the tellers of them, were not much in demand. It is understandable, yet somehow strange, that war and privation and danger should prove such a stimulus to enjoyment of the rather better sort of printed word. After dinner, and when not actively giving old Jerry what for, all ranks tended to retire quietly to bed and tuck in to books by, say, Arnold Bennett or Hardy or Wells. Poetry too was in great demand. Reading of any kind was a solace.

As a matter of fact, I rather enjoy riddles, good or bad as the case may be. The late (and with what sadness I write that word) Paul Dehn had a similar liking, though the riddles that he himself invented were always in the topmost class. In quoting one of them now, and a rather saucy one, I must emphasise that Paul and I, both nurtured at excellent schools (Shrewsbury and Oundle) and reputable universities (Oxford and Cambridge), had been made, and remained, well aware of the dangers of 'smutty talk' and did not at all go in for it. But literature, even the best, requires every now and then a strong and pivotal word to lend it point, and you will find a not very shocking one in the riddle which follows, together with an archaic English usage still popular in those brainteasers that, with paper hats and musical instruments, come tumbling out of Christmas crackers. Ready? 'What is the difference between a debutante and an Elizabethan gallant who hath split his codpiece?' Answer: 'There is no difference. They both have coming-out balls.'

No longer true (of debutantes, anyway). You cannot, as the former Henrietta ('Deb of the Year') Tiarks explains, spend evenings in discotheques, put on make-up, smoke and go out with boyfriends from about the age of 15 on, and then 'come out'. There is nothing left to come out from. There can be few people, and certainly not the girls themselves, who regret the disappearance of formal presentations at Court. Least regretful of all must be the Queen herself (the constant bobbing up and down in front of her of hundreds of white visions, with swaying plumes, was said to have brought on such severe sea-sickness that she had to raise her sights and just stare swimmingly at the wall above their heads). Nobody liked to be smiled at by the Duke of Edinburgh. Kindness itself, he reserved his beams for the ugly ones to cheer them up. In my youth, these English roses were to be seen constantly in the illustrated papers and magazines during the 'season'. I remember a particularly engaging one called Primrose Salt, a name which to those interested in cooking seems to suggest an exciting new herbal additive, just the thing to have handy when called upon to 'adjust your seasonings'.

Margaret Pringle deals in *Dance Little Ladies* (Orbis: £6.75 and very lavishly illustrated) with the acute and age-old problem for parents of how on earth to get rid of their daughters (the popular and well-tried method of just leaving them out on a lofty rock is no longer legal). The public social exposure in the 'presentation' system, invented by upper-crust Victorians with too much time on their hands, maintained itself, despite wars, depressions, strikes and the briskly changing social scene, until 1957 and seems now, as it did to some then, idiotic and wasteful beyond belief. The numbers alone are staggering. In the 22 years up to 1957, 53,000 debutantes, virginal (elaborate sex was right out), apprehensive (though their curtseys were expertly Vacani-taught, it was only too easy to measure your length before the monarch), their puppy-fat squeezed into, for many, totally unsuitable and wildly expensive dresses, presented by a titled relation or somebody bought for hard cash (the going rate for Duchesses was around £2,000 a time), glided jerkily before their sovereign in the grand mass cattle market. The war years meant that there were 20,000 carcases queuing up for the treat, though by then fringe lunacies, such as instruction at a Kensington school of deportment in the correct way for ladies to pick up dropped handkerchiefs (bottoms as near the ground as possible in a sort of mini-curtsey, but watch that skirt!) had ceased.

And for whom was all this trouble being taken? Who were the handsome Adonises, who the knights in shining armour come eagerly to claim their dazzling prize? 'Oh God', used to mutter, as the front door bell rang, the father of one debutante as she waited, all togged up for a ball, for her escort, 'here comes another bounder!' They were known as 'deb's delights' and here, from an unusual source, is a description of them: 'The kind of men one meets at these functions are insufferable. They are immature, arrogant, insensitive, callous and unbelievably stupid. Guards officers, trainees at Lloyd's, aspiring stockbrokers – chinless juveniles one year out of public school, living in Chelsea or Kensington on small allowances from home.'

The views of our informant (from, surprisingly perhaps, our NS itself) are borne out on all sides, especially by the 'delights' themselves. Appalling behaviour in famous London houses was the thing and everybody *roared*. 'One was frightfully rude. People behaved as they imagined people did in *Vile Bodies*. I remember one night when we were meant to be on guard at St. James's Palace. One of us got absolutely soaked and when he got to Marlborough House, where Queen Mary lived, he halted the troop and started to throw gravel at the window and shouted out that she was an old Hun.' Queen Mary, needless to say, behaved impeccably, even interceding with the Colonel on behalf of the culprit (confined to barracks for a month).

A final surprise, and again from the NS. Those who haven't, perhaps, rated us very highly socially must think again. 'In 1956 the NEW STATESMAN threw a cocktail party at Londonderry House for 450 guests and the bill was £604 7s. 7d. Among other things, the guests consumed 25 bottles of gin, 12 bottles of whisky and 168 bottles of non-vintage Moët et Chandon at 26s. 6d. a bottle. Cigarettes were provided free.' I remember it well, and very nice too. Those were the days.

Labour and the Left in the 1930s
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Letters to the Editor

Managing the Mixed Economy

Sir, Roy Hattersley (NS 18 November) has given us in his 'option 3' the standard version of the neo-classical, micro-welfare economics view of state intervention, in its pluralistic-fabian guise. If it is not a far left 'ancient cliché', it is certainly pre-Keynesian. The state intervenes not in any general way (say to maintain full employment in the whole economy) but only in a selective way, at places decided by the market system itself. There is a standard list of such situations, some of which Hattersley rehearses (control of monopoly, externalities etc.).

Roy Hattersley points to the central problem, but he doesn't actually see it. Tawney, the pragmatist, would have nationalised more than Labour has ever done. Why then, if as Hattersley seems to see it, Labour has had too fundamentalist a view of public ownership has it failed to come up even to Tawney's standards? This is the crucial question. Is it that even pragmatic extensions of public ownership are somehow not possible or compatible with the continued viability of the 'mixed economy'? To carry through Hattersley's modest aim of intervening where the perfect market and true competition no longer holds, would in fact require a massive mobilisation of economic power and political will, involving nothing less than a transformation of the economy from one which is driven and dominated by 'non-competitive' large firms, to a public sector-driven economy, with market competition left for the small- and medium-sized firms.

The 'half-way house' just doesn't seem to be on. Once the public sector gets above a certain size or starts to become entrepreneurial, and commercial, the market sector itself begins to collapse. In this situation the dynamic of the market has to be replaced by an alternative dynamic from the public sector – or else the whole economy just grinds to a halt. This is why the retreat from the radical aspects of Labour's 1974 programme has been so complete. A massive acquisition of land under the Land Act would have undermined the land market and the values of buildings and land, assets vital to the viability of many firms and institutions. Similarly, an active NEB would have played havoc with the stock market and the development plans of the large corporations.

There is little sign that this brute choice between a private sector-driven and a public sector-driven economy is generally recognised. It is highly uncomfortable, but it does seem that present government policy represents a more or less explicit commitment to sustain the market sector as the first priority, and hence a recognition that the mixed economy is indeed a 'market-driven' system.

ANDREW BROADBENT

Flat 2
49 South Hill Park
London NW3

The Gould Report

Sir, I am very sorry if my reply to Mr Shaw (Letters, 11 November) struck Mr Arblaster (Letters, 18 November) as 'ill-tempered'. I had to read it hurriedly down the 'phone and imagined it was simply direct and economical. I set out to say three things:

(1) I do not think Mr Shaw faced the substantive points in my article on the Gould Report. That is why I was not able to comment on substance, a gap for which Mr Arblaster now reproaches me.
(2) Mr Shaw used instead a considerable number of rhetorical devices. My original draft gave instances from Mr Shaw's letter of these. But the letter became too long, so I deleted the illustrations.
(3) I said, and I meant it, that it was a matter of great regret to me that Mr Shaw had responded in this way, especially since it gave more ammunition to Professor Gould. To translate this as Mr Arblaster does into: '(Hoggart) virtually hands Shaw over to Gould as a fit object for his inquisitional activities' is a dreadful distortion of language and thought.

I could say much more about Mr Arblaster's own rhetoric. It is a pity – and I say this also more in sorrow than in anger – that if anyone utters a criticism of people such as Mr Arblaster they are likely to be not so much argued with as verbally smeared, as though they had taken the first step towards fascism. This too gives support to Professor Gould's case; as a socialist I regret it very much.

RICHARD HOGGART
Warden

Goldsmith's College
New Cross
London SE14

Abuse of Trust

Sir, I am sure your readers will have formed their own conclusions about the abusive references to me in the article of your correspondent James Fenton (NS 18 November). Mr Fenton did not even stop at personal abuse: e.g. 'a deep Chaucerian flush rose to his face . . . the blood pumped its way to the tip of his nose'. It would appear that I had said something your correspondent did not like. I had entered the 'Strangers Bar' of the House of Commons and was asked by Mr Simon Hoggart of the *Guardian*: 'What was it like at Grunwick?' (I had spent some six hours there that morning.) I did not know Mr Fenton whom I had never seen before. I did not learn who he was until just before the end of a conversation which became an argument not of my seeking.

However, I am not here concerned with the facts or otherwise of what was said. What I am concerned about are the ethics of journalism in the House of Commons. The relationship between MPs and journalists is based on mutual trust in order to ensure the free dissemination of news. If every conversation of a private nature were to be retailed in the manner used by Mr Fenton, it would open the way to all kinds of abuse and one-sided bias. It is customary to inform MPs when they are being interviewed, or to ask about a particular item, 'Can I use that?' etc.

If this were not so it can readily be seen that conversation with journalists would be stilted, guarded, or cease altogether. I believe Mr Fenton has abused this trust, and even gone to the lengths of comparing an opening speech in a planned debate with a casual argument in a bar where he was a guest, and where trust was implicit. I shall, of course, take the matter up with the proper authorities in The House of Commons, and indeed have been asked to do so by a group of MPs who called the article to my attention.

MARTIN FLANNERY

House of Commons
Westminster

Sir, Having seen Martin Flannery at Grunwick's, I find James Fenton's picture of him unrecognisable. Mr Flannery's exaggerated comparison is much more likely to have come from horror at seeing British policemen beating up demonstrators with evident enjoyment; to well brought-up working-class people it does, still, seem an alien sight. Outside Grunwick's, far from being a quivering ranter, Martin Flannery has represented, often alone, the calm, solid pressure which the TUC, backed by a Labour government, could and should be bringing to bear on enemies of the trade union movement such as George Ward and NAFF. To have his eyewitness account dismissed by a Labour Home Secretary must have been an isolating experience, and now James Fenton sneers at his distress.

FRANCIS MCDONAGH

12 St Martin's Close
London NW1

Degrees of Failure

Sir, May I refer to the article 'A Degree of Failure' (NS 21 October) in which I was one of the subjects under discussion by Margaret Gilmore? In her article, Margaret Gilmore used material which I gave her many months ago, for use in her research and I was accredited with the statement that I believed my failure was due to 'political victimisation'. Since this article was published, University College Cardiff, of which I am still a student, has asked me to withdraw my statement, and dissociate myself from the views outlined in that article. Your readers may be interested to know that, despite my public apology in the Welsh Press, for using such 'emotive' language, but nevertheless reaffirming my belief that 'irregularities' did take place two and a half years ago, Professor M. Albrow, the Dean of my Faculty, attempted to have me expelled by the College Council under an ancient Charter rule, which gives College the power to 'expel offending students', on the basis of the NEW STATESMAN article.

Apart from the obvious threats that undermine the basic aims of universities (including the search for truth and knowledge), University College has allowed two senior members of staff to attempt to expel a student because he has made allegations, without even investigating such allegations. Thankfully, the attempt to expel me failed, and has resulted in a campaign by the students' union to prevent such blatant victimisation from ever occurring again on this campus. Moreover, we have the support of MPs in our campaign to publicise this issue. At the same time we are asking that an independent and external committee of inquiry be instigated to investigate all allegations of irregularities that have been made at University College, Cardiff (and there have been many).

The dangerous precedent being set by Cardiff University College should act as a timely warning to your readers as to the way some British universities are being run. Surely this whole affair at Cardiff, including other incidents over the last few years only confirms and supports the general tenet of the article on 21 October in which it was argued that some university staff do have enormous power, and in the last analysis are not accountable to society at large.

STUART BARBER
Senate Representatives for Social Studies
Cardiff Students' Union

Sir, We were saddened by Margaret Gilmore's article in which she reports on the first year examination results of Mr Stuart Barber, a student as University College, Cardiff. She

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reports a belief, which he has held for over two years, that he has been 'politically victimised' and says that his results did not do justice to his ability. It is sad because her account is wrong in detail and misleading in general, because his belief is entirely without foundation and because she is in no position to assess his academic ability.

We would have hoped that the NEW STATESMAN would not be party to encouraging this kind of fantasy. The discussion of an individual student's ability is not a matter for journalism but for those directly concerned with his work. In this respect we consider your article to impugn our own and our colleagues' professional competence and integrity.

M. C. ALBROW
Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Social Studies
P. D. ANTHONY
Acting Head of the Department of Industrial Relations
University College
Cardiff

Dog Days

Sir, I am inclined to agree with most of the points made by Colin Smith about my post-war impressions of Vietnam (Letters, 18 November). However, on the subject of eating dogs I'm afraid I cannot concede. Dog-eating is a feature of some poor societies because dogs, being scavengers, feed themselves to a great extent. All I can say is that I saw dog meat on sale in North Vietnam (which is poor), and did not see any in the South (which is better off).

However, Mr Smith's references to the Vietnamese considering dog 'quite a treat' and to the chubby black Labrador which a Vietcong officer fancied eating raise another, moral, issue, which should be stated in case anyone should regard the subject as an amusing diversion. Dog meat is not naturally tender, and your readers should know that the Vietnamese method of killing dogs consists of placing the animal in a sack, tying the neck, and then beating the dog to death as slowly as possible. The wretched animal's agonised contortions soften its flesh. A skilled practitioner can make the operation last for several hours. On seeing and *hearing* it I got the impression I was not witnessing homo sapiens' finest hour. But perhaps I'm being a sentimentalist. After all, I do own a dog.

IAN MATHER
The Observer
London EC4

The Eye of Peace

Sir, It was all very well for C. H. Rolph to do an 'atmosphere' piece on the Greek elections (NS 18 November, though from internal evidence written on 3 November) if as a 'visiting oaf' (his expression) he had no idea what the issues might have been. But when he chooses to include a single fact in a page of waffle he should at least try to get it right. No such entity as the 'New National Democratic Party' contested last Sunday's election; and if Mr Rolph was merely confusing the title of the New Democracy party it is hard to see how this could have been involved in 'abuse of the conservative Karamanlis administration', since New Democracy is in fact the party that Mr Karamanlis leads.

As far as the 'atmosphere' is concerned, it appears that Mr Rolph was chiefly distressed by the number of leaflets in the streets and the bewildering array of candidates' photographs. It is disappointing to find so many column-inches of the NEW STATESMAN (and indeed of Mr Rolph, who has written so well on British matters) given over to comment of this order of shallow descriptiveness. Nor is it easy to see how Mr Rolph reached his conclusion that 'election apathy' was 'rampant'. Had he not bothered to attend a single election rally? Or at least to be told of such events, with crowds of 100,000 or more even in the provincial centres? An informative comparison might be made with electoral interest in other democracies.

Then, Mr Rolph's description of the campaign ambience as 'frightening, totalitarian, menacing'. In no other press report is either of these (two, since the third is redundant) adjectives remotely echoed. An unselective sample: 'enthusiastic, flag-waving multitudes . . . a spirited and excited campaign all round' (*The Times*); 'conduct of the campaign . . . impressive; . . . police have been unobtrusive, and even the largest crowds in Athens have produced no atmosphere of menace; . . . a remarkably civilised tradition of crowd behaviour' (*Guardian*); 'the cheerful, noisy setting of a campaign resembling a national festival' (*Daily Telegraph*); 'in any generally acceptable sense (Karamanlis) has restored democracy, given Greeks back their self-respect, and restored them to a sense of national self-confidence' (*Financial Times*). All quotes from papers of the same date as Mr Rolph's effort. Is he really the only one in step?

Finally, having exhausted what little he has to say about the election, Mr Rolph goes on to fill the rest of his copy with an episode in which he saw the Director of the Athens Police, and asked him some questions about noise and rubbish. No wonder he caught this official stealing a look at his wristwatch towards the end of his (unscheduled) appointment.

PETER THOMPSON
Press Officer
Greek Embassy
1a Holland Park
London W11

Medical not Sexual

Sir, Arthur Marshall is a delight always and so knowledgeable that I am diffident at expressing an opinion different from his. However, I do think he is wrong in stating the authorities at Clifton School (NS 11 November) were fearful the boys might find the sight of one another's knees too disturbing.

Back in 1922, when I was house surgeon to Mr Warren Low, then senior surgeon at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, he told me the boys at Clifton wore breeches as a protection against tetanus, of which there had been several cases at the school. Furthermore, the headmaster inquired what else could be done to guard against this fearful complaint, and he was told he must give up grazing horses in the field. It seems only fair to the headmaster Mr Percival that these facts should be made known.

G. M. WATSON
8A Welton Old Road
Welton
North Humberside

Quiddities and Fripperies

Sir, The English language is a remarkably precise instrument when used by skilful and careful writers, but it is being turned into a blunt one in the hands of some of your contributors. In two recent reviews (NS 28 October and 11 November) Benedict Nightingale uses the word *quiddity*, clearly thinking it means 'quirk or oddity of character'. In fact it means 'quibble' or 'subtle distinction in argument' (orig. 'the essence of a thing').

In the 'London Diary' (NS 11 November) the word *fripperies* is misused. Frippery denotes 'tawdry finery' or 'useless trifles' (orig. 'old clothes'), yet Michael Parkinson writes of a swimming-pool being built for Princess Anne as a 'frippery', – some trifle!

M. BERESFORD
9 Wyngate Road
Hale
Cheshire

Peccavi

Sir, I made an annoying mistake in my review of the Botticelli Dante. The *Purgatorio* cantos featuring Beatrice's arrival are XXIX-XXX, not XIX-XX. An 'X' went missing in both cases. I should have noticed, but was too busy pointing out other people's errors.

CLIVE JAMES
Cambridge

Crete in 1941

Sir, I am currently undertaking research for a book I shall shortly write on the German invasion of Crete in 1941. In this connection I would be delighted to hear from any of your readers who took part in the defence of the island as naval, army or air force personnel.

A. J. SIMPSON
48 Dalmore Road
London SE21

Not the First Time

Sir, Is the first sentence of last week's NEW STATESMAN copyright? I'd like it for my Christmas cards. It says: 'Good news from the Middle East; it sounds like a contradiction in terms.'

HERBERT MCCABE
Blackfriars
Oxford

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CHRISTMAS BOOKS–1

John Bayley

The Duellists

Lermontov: Tragedy in the Caucasus by LAURENCE KELLY *Constable* £6.50

Great poets, even good ones, can usually look after themselves; it must be very rare for genius to throw its life away before achieving what it knows it can. Byron is the obvious case. The liberty of Greece, and the chance to run his own show there, was not only an honourable assignment and a cause to which he was genuinely and passionately committed, but a way of escaping the knowledge that he would never write anything as good as what he had done already. The famous *besoin de fatalité* was as much as anything else the grand artificer's fear of repetition.

It seems likely that the same applies even to Pushkin and Lermontov, both killed in duels while planning fresh works and apparently in the full flow of creation. But it may be that, like Gogol – who died simply by giving up eating, the only activity besides writing that really absorbed him – they had done their work. Lermontov was planning a long novel about Russia's imperial expansion under Catherine, the triumph of 1812, the wars against Turks and Persians and the conquest of the Caucasus. One never knows, but it does not sound as if it could have been a masterpiece like *A Hero of Our Time*, that extraordinary one-off piece of craftsmanship in deadpan camp style for which Lermontov will always be remembered, and which according to such a good judge as Mirsky is the finest piece of prose in Russian.

From childhood Lermontov worshipped Byron, translated him and imitated him, but he was not in the least like him, even though they had a provenance oddly in common – the Lermontov family, ennobled by Michael Romanov in the 17th century, were originally Learmonts, soldiers of fortune from Scotland. As a cadet he wrote a poem called *Sashka* which is all the less like *Don Juan* for being one of the closest and most perceptive imitations of it: it is also determinedly obscene, so much so that no version appeared till long after Lermontov's death and much of it has never been officially printed.

But he had none of the fundamentally easy nature of Byron, in the writing as in the living, which made for the allegro of ruminative confidence, the brilliant forthcomingness of *Don Juan*. He understood from Byron, as from Chateaubriand and the other Romantics, how to create a persona, but he did not employ it to unify his work. Like Pushkin before him he seems to have considered each new project from a technical viewpoint: how was it to be done in terms of appropriate form – ballad, lyric, narrative poem, play or novel. His poems often seem allotted their 'romanticism' with an almost chilling detachment, using contemporary and local colour to create a meticulously gauged impression. Though it creates an inimitable tone, at once offhand and deeply intent, even such a lyric masterpiece as 'Alone I come out on the road' seems to have no direct connection with the Lermontov consciousness, in spite of its seemingly intimate appeal. In the same way, Pechorin, the Hero of Our Time, is sliced into clear-cut impressions – those of himself and of others about him – so that he remains an objective and a genuinely solitary figure even though he is created out of the author's self-awareness.

Lermontov was a water-colourist of some talent, and this seems to have gone with his genius for the sketch and short story, each carefully grouped and separately framed. Many of his highly-coloured poems later inspired the Russian painter Vrubel. In this original and scholarly study Laurence Kelly attaches a lot of importance to Lermontov's painting, with which he occupied himself on campaign whenever possible, and provides some excellent plates and examples not elsewhere available. He writes well, and from first-hand experience, about the Caucasus, and gives a graphic account of the long war of annexation in which Russia was engaged there, a war involving places and peoples which fascinated Russian writers down to Tolstoy, who wrote about them in 'The Cossacks' and in 'Hadji Murad', his last and greatest story. Hadji Murad, with whose followers Lermontov had himself been closely engaged in several actions, was the lieutenant of the Moslem leader Shamil.

Kelly's seems to me not only the best popular study of the poet yet available in English but to be quite unusually successful at one of the trickiest tasks of the biographer (and one seldom overcome in the monumental studies of Russian authors): he suggests the personality and psychology of the subject obliquely; there is no attempt to pluck out the heart of the mystery by exhaustive analysis. Without making the reader lose either interest or sympathy he shows how insufferable Lermontov was – quite odious, indeed – and in an essentially commonplace way. But no Romantic writer was so successful as he was in *A Hero of Our Time* at turning the commonplace into the dark and enigmatic, with terse and measured touches that still convey the dullness that lurks behind. Julien Sorel is a more engaging but more facile hero than Pechorin: for Stendhal, a much nicer man than Lermontov, is himself infatuated with him, as young persons of enterprise and spirit who wish to realise themselves by playing a good part have been ever since. But no one identifies with Pechorin. Although the idea of him is really as vulgar as that in poems of Lermontov like 'The Demon', the art of the prose shrinks it from the romantic parade of self-hatred into something altogether more deadly, simple, and life-size. It is here that the inspiration for Dostoevsky's mean heroes may perhaps be found.

Kelly is particularly good on army matters, which also obsessed his hero. With a worthless father and spoilt by a doting grandmother, Lermontov was always preoccupied with the need to impress other people, chiefly men, for in spite of casual beddings and a ritual heartbreak over Varvara Lopukhina, who married a rich old man, Lermontov's feelings seem to have centred chiefly on his own sex. His conduct in action, where he showed all sorts of medal-winning daring and initiative, was not intended to impress the girls. Nor was it to gain 'experience' as a writer: indeed he made oddly little attempt to use what he knew here. His famous poem about the dying officer in Dagestan, dreaming of the girl in Petersburg who is dreaming of her lover lying dead in a gorge in Dagestan, was borrowed from the account a brother officer gave him about what it felt like to be left lying wounded on the battlefield. True, in 'The Battle of the Valerik' he did write a poem about a large-scale action he had taken part in (Hemingway was not present, we might note, at Caporetto) but he was devoid of the literary vanity of writing about how he had been 'there'.

He needed other and more direct kinds of admiration – even, rather touchingly, that of worthy elders like the Maxim Maximych of *A Hero of Our Time* – but he needed still more to make himself disliked. He was a compulsive tease, and it was this that did for him. Kelly has researched the circumstances of his last duel with particular care, drawing on the memoir of Prince Vasiltchikov, published here for the first time through the permission of a descendant. He has even investigated the characteristics of the Kuchenreuter, the celebrated marque of duelling pistol with which Lermontov's opponent was armed. This man, Martynov, seems to have been a silly but amiable character, goaded beyond endurance by the way Lermontov constantly needled him. Even so, the duel was an arranged one; both men had told their seconds they would fire in the air, and so the seconds had not bothered to bring a carriage or a doctor. But through Lermontov's own demonic perversity things went wrong. As he reached the point where he should have ritually discharged his pistol, he turned round and said loudly: 'I'm not going to shoot at that imbecile.' En-

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raged at this final insult the normally pacific Martynov raised his own pistol and shot Lermontov dead at point-blank range.

The Tsar remarked to his courtiers, 'I hear Lermontov has been killed in a duel – a dog's death for a dog', but his sister was so upset by this that she made him come back like a modern politician setting the record straight, and say: 'Gentlemen, the man who could have taken Pushkin's place has been killed.' Baron D'Anthès, who shot Pushkin, never regretted the fact in the slightest, but in his old age Martynov could never forgive himself the fury that had 'made him the murderer of Russia's second greatest poet'. Historically perhaps the Tsar had the last word when he made about *A Hero of Our Time* one of his few recorded literary criticisms: that the real 'hero' should have been Maxim Maximych. Soviet writers have been agreeing with this judgment for the last 60 years and implementing it in a whole gallery of modest, loyal and worthy military characters.

Russell Davies

Appendicitis

Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams by SYLVIA PLATH *Faber* £4.95

A merry orange cover and a title that happens to sound like the latest thing in rock musicals: they have done their best with this book. But it is really rather a grisly item, one more stage in the cruel anatomy lesson that goes on exposing the untreated innards of Sylvia Plath. In the course of its preparation, yet another pile of manuscripts, Ted Hughes tells us, 'emerged' in the USA: more licences, then, for exploratory surgery. Every last organ, eventually, is going to be hauled into view, and examined for deficiencies. Many will be discovered to have been in perfectly normal working order – subject, in other words, to perfectly normal failures. Others will have been redundant in the first place, but troublesome, like the appendix. This is a volume full of appendices. One can feel the pain they caused and sympathise with the sufferer; but as for a remedy, one can advise only simple removal.

We are dealing with Sylvia Plath's miscellaneous prose. Now prose has the well-known virtues of minestrone: robust and immediate nourishment, colour, warmth, relative ease of manufacture, compendiousness and surprise. You never know what's going to turn up in it. From the cook's point of view, you have to be prepared to throw things in and forget about them, knowing that many of your most delicate flavours will be drowned. But Sylvia Plath did not have the cook's mentality. Her mind was not so much a kitchen as a bathroom – a sanatorium laboratory. She was a distiller by temperament: a brewer of tinctures, a slapper-on of poultices. Her creativity took a reactive form. Where there was a wound, she would dress it, often delicately, sometimes elaborately, occasionally with the frightening roughness of emergency. And her reaction to pain was wonderfully discriminating; she surprised the world by identifying new strains.

But pleasure was something she had to build from nothing, and the process was tough. 'Her story-writing', Hughes writes, 'always took place in an atmosphere of locked combat. Here, her intense ambition had clearly met something equal and opposite.' It depends what you mean by 'intense', of course. Plath's ambition was not intense in quite the way you might expect. All she wanted to do, oddly enough, was to write successful and money-spinning short stories for the top prosy magazines: the *New Yorker*, especially, but with the *Ladies' Home Journal* as a very acceptable alternative. She had no talent for this at all, however. Her short pieces never became stories. They described, at best, symbolic situations concealing a not very latent threat; the plot consisted in the realisation of the threat (or in one notably embarrassing case, the withdrawal of it) at the end. Her journal, apparently, records perpetual disgust at the failure of these narratives. It could hardly have done otherwise.

The nasty irony of it is, of course, that the worse the stories are, the more 'revealing' they get; a collection like this makes predatory thesis-researchers of us all. Hughes's ominous headings seem to encourage the process: *'Part I*: The more successful short stories and prose pieces'; *'Part II*: Other Stories'. Oh dear. It's quite a relief to find that Part III consists of 'Excerpts from Notebooks', and not *'Highly* unsuccessful short stories'. The relative success of Part I, anyway, is explained by the fact that the pieces here are not trying, on the whole, to be stories. They are content to be fragments. The title-piece is something more than that: a hallucinatory hospital-fantasy on the filing-away of dreams. Like most of the books, it does not tell so much as dwell, but it does have a kind of mad urgency, as of a poem expanded recklessly into a monologue.

'The Wishing Box', a more orthodox piece of writing, scrapes into Part I, among the acceptable reminiscences of childhood, glimpses of a Mothers' Union, meditations on death and poetic craft; but it really should stand at the start of Part II, to which it is the obvious clue. Here we have a married couple, Agnes and Harold, whose life is a contest of dreams. Harold is a virtuoso in this field; he spends his nights hobnobbing non-stop in an all-star Elysium. Agnes, meanwhile, remembers nothing but lowering landscapes and an oppressive mood. She attempts to ginger up a seemingly dead imagination, but neither novels nor TV, nor in the end a diet of alcohol, can put her in the fanciful vein. A decorous suicide is the finish, leaving Agnes with a 'slight, secret smile of triumph' on her face at last. This is hardly enough to dispel the fear expressed by the story: the fear of barrenness, the lack of a 'shaping' talent.

This is indeed what Part II reveals, ending wretchedly with 'Day of Success'. 'Included here as an example of her efforts at pastiche' is Hughes's hopefully-touted phrase. The story tells of a nappy-laden wife who spends a whole day working up jealous fantasies about her successful husband and the flashy media-women he's at work with. A bitchy friend drops by to make it worse. But when 'Jacob' gets home, he comes on like an advert for pullovers; loving, enclosing, domesticated, devoted. A candy-floss curtain falls over the ghastly scene. It did not make the *Ladies' Home Journal*; *Bananas*, in sardonic mood, printed it last year.

The best of the book, as you might expect, is Part III, where fictional shape is not required, endings do not have to be contrived or left dangling, names need not be invented. There must be many volumes of 'Cambridge Notes' all over the country that are as fraught and unsparing as these of Sylvia Plath's, student love-life being what it is (or surprisingly often isn't); but the closeness of these enticing fragments to the time of 'the Colossus' makes them fascinating, if only by the contrast in verbal economy. The prose notes tend to throb repetitively at this stage.

Later, in the last years of her life, the poet seems to have arrived, unexpectedly, at a slightly hazy, humorous point of detachment from events. The last pages here, on the Hughes's aged neighbours and a convocation of bee-keepers (*cf.* 'The Bee Meeting') are charming and selfless, and much more at peace with the outdoors than might have been feared. But these late-flowering pages are soon over. One can only assume that there is not much comparable stuff in the bulk of the journals, whose hurtfulness Hughes is still unwilling to loose upon the world. The vituperation therein must be terrible indeed if the editor's resolve persists. I can't help thinking he should brave the opposition. A burst of finite public agony might well be better for us all, in the long run, than a lingering sorrow like this book. There is no health in it.

Among this week's contributors:

JOHN BAYLEY is Warton Professor of English at the University of Oxford. Among his publications are *Tolstoy and the Novel* and *Pushkin: A Comparative Commentary*.

HAROLD BEAVER's books include *American Critical Essays* and two novels, *The Confessions of Jotham Simiyu* and *Pardoner's Tale*.

DAVID MITCHELL is the author of *Women on the Warpath, The Fighting Pankhursts, 1919 Red Mirage* and *Queen Christabel*.

ALASTAIR HETHERINGTON was editor of the *Guardian* 1956-75; he is now Controller, BBC Scotland.

A. N. WILSON's novel *The Sweets of Pimlico* was published this year by Secker.

PHILLIP WHITEHEAD is MP for Derby North.

TOM NAIRN is the author of *The Break-Up of Britain* (NLB).

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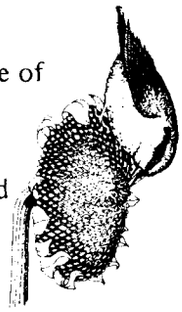

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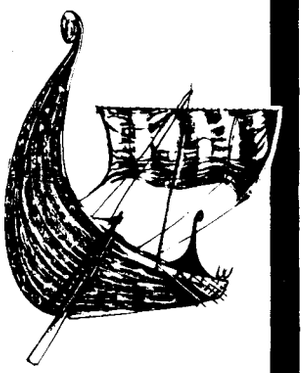

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Tom Nairn

Shipshape

Devolution: The End of Britain? by TAM DALYELL *Cape* £4.95 and £2.95

This is a crusading book. It is a sustained blast of the trumpet from the eccentric parliamentary leader of the campaign against both devolution and peripheral nationalism. As such it should be welcome, because in spite of the pyramids of pietistic literature on the British political system no one has yet produced a decent new defence of it against these threats.

The reason for the lapse emerges from Tam Dalyell's pages with dreadful clarity. Crusades require a powerful motivating cause. It may be either progressive or reactionary, but it has to be exciting: vision alone allows the sword to be wielded to good effect. But this book is visionless. One cannot even locate it in the camp of the moderates, passionate or otherwise. Its object is to demolish the nationalists and their camp-followers; but on the positive side it is simply a manifesto of conservatism, revealing uncritical devotion to almost every aspect of the status quo.

As a result, Mr Dalyell's thunder is ludicrously muffled. He regards nationalism as a hydra-headed conspiracy against the true will of the sensible, silent majority. Yet when we turn from his excoriation of the beast to the extremely brief chapter offering alternatives, what is found there? 'We must rethink our whole approach *within our existing constitutional framework*,' he roars. 'My suggestions are dull and earthy, and would command no headlines.' This is true: they amount to a few changes in local government, televising parliament ('This would almost certainly counteract the Scottish feeling of being remote from the centre of political life') and abolishing the New Town Corporations.

Apart from this, the old imperial ark is in pretty good shape. Mr Dalyell discounts the filthy foreign rumours about water in the holds. His only worry is about the folk on the bridge: slackers and lunatics have led them to believe mutiny is rumbling down below, and would be alleviated by looser discipline. Mr Dalyell says this well-meaning weakness is disastrous, and will infallibly foment the revolt it is designed to cure. In accordance (presumably) with the theory of ship-schools – of which he has been such an outstanding champion – all he asks is a rope's end and permission to wade into the blighters. Mr Dalyell is both a House of Commons man and an exemplary representative of squirely socialism. Both traits loom large in *Devolution: The End of Britain?*

Although often filled with unintentional comedy reminiscent of a Disraeli novel, his version of the various breakdowns in the mighty clockwork of state is interesting. For example, his account of the machinations surrounding the 1974 special conference of the Labour Party in Scotland will be valuable to historians. It lays particular stress upon the role of Alex Kitson. This most influential of devolutionist conspirators mounted a spider-web of deals with other Scottish union *mafiosi*, and almost single-handedly converted Labour to support for an Assembly. The tale is told by quotation from a diary the author kept at that time, and makes for some lively pages:

> Yesterday, it was a bad, bad day. I picked up Ronnie [the Chairman of his Constituency Party] . . . and he told me that he had had bad news on the AEU grapevine, that Alex Kitson had fixed Gavin Laird. When I arrived I bumped into the Buchans. Janey said bluntly that we [the anti-Assembly group] had had it; Alec Donnett of the NUGMW had been squared! I could hardly believe it . . . How Alec Donnett, believing what he does about the Assembly, will be able to look at himself in his shaving mirror, I know not . . .

When the author turns away from the antics in the corridors of power, he flags visibly. The book is innocent of any acquaintance with recent and interesting efforts at analysis of the nationalist phenomenon, like Christopher Harvie's *Scotland and Nationalism* or Keith Webb's *The Rise of Scottish Nationalism*. It has no theoretical perspective on the subject whatever, and what Mr Dalyell has to say about Europe is entirely from the viewpoint of the newer corridors he has been tramping since 1975 as a delegate to the European Parliament. A continent-wide movement appears exclusively through the pebble-glass of quoted remarks by other deputies in Strasbourg.

Tam Dalyell's squirely side is expressed chiefly in the two astonishing chapters called 'The Pressure Groups'. These demand some exegesis for an English readership. They are devoted to examining 'the attitudes and arguments – on both sides – of institutions, organisations and pressure groups' towards devolution. Hardly surprisingly, most of these organised bodies are opposed to it, and fearful of independence. So the author duly trots out their canny, conservative statements. Southern readers may not know that this is merely a portrait of the Scottish Establishment, the most dismal collection of powerful mediocrities in Northern Europe. Of course this sub-ruling class is scared of home rule, and terrified of independence. It has existed for two centuries by leaning, fairly comfortably, upon the far more solid elite of another country. The power to assume an upright posture probably left its lower limbs about the time of Sir Walter Scott's death and the Great Reform Bill. Unable either to keep its autonomy or assimilate completely to its southern cousins – because of the persisting difference of Scottish society – it collapsed into an essentially cringing and parasitic condition. Most of the dearth in modern Scottish culture is rooted in that fact.

Very few outside observers understand that this is the crux of the political struggle going on in Scotland. It is a new class struggle, not one of the old UK Left and Right, and certainly not merely between

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the Scots and the English. For all its faults the SNP – as this book unwittingly demonstrates – remains a resolutely anti-establishment movement, detested by Mr Dalyell's cohort of *bien-pensant* allies. Its middle-class, New-Town radicalism now runs against Unionist enemies on both the Right and the Left. But while the former are irreconcilable, the latter are not. Through the attitude of the Scottish TUC (which Dalyell attributes to a communist conspiracy), the formation of the SLP and the conversion – albeit reluctant – of the wider labour movement to home rule, a much fuller assault will eventually be mounted on the old gang.

This should not be such bad news for socialists, in either Scotland or England. But Tam Dalyell seems unable to hear anything but the footsteps of the grim reaper. Like other old-left radicals in Scotland, he has been misled by anti-SNP hysteria into alliance with a collection of mummies and 24-carat reactionaries. These unfortunates can imagine no future except foundering alongside the Scottish Landowners Federation, the Professorate, the Scottish CBI, the D. C. Thomson organisation, STV, and the other layers of cold porridge we have to contend with. Actually most of them will be alive, kicking, and conscious of their mistake in a few years time. But I am not sure Mr Dalyell will: judging by these pages, the patrician in him is incomparably stronger than the socialist, and one cannot be sure he will survive (in his own words) 'the inevitable slide to independence'.

A. N. Wilson

Gee, It's Geoffrey

The Life and Times of Chaucer by JOHN GARDNER *Cape* £7.50

The lust for knowing what should not be known keeps biographers in business. What *cannot* be known presents even more tempting material. That is why, presumably, the two great men whose personal lives are most impenetrable – Christ and Shakespeare – have the largest number of biographers. From Aubrey to A. L. Rowse, from St Luke to Lord Longford, they freely flow, unhampered by the despotism of fact. Unlike history proper, which is dependent on at least some pretence to academic endeavour, they require no arduous research in the making. And, unlike novels, little imagination is required in order to write them.

At first glance, John Gardner's *Life and Times of Chaucer* seems to belong to this excellent tradition. Chaucer, we read,

> was perhaps still musing on the problem of the World in his house late that night, frowning in his medieval spectacles . . . – the children all in bed, Philippa across the dim, shuttered room from him, fashioning small needle-point flowers of vermillion and gold.
>
> Stroking his beard, reading by fluttering

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candlelight his copy of Macrobius . . . [etc, etc.]

Or, on the peculiarly modern (and American) question of whether the Chaucers were 'happily married', Mr Gardner is

> inclined to believe theirs must have been an excellent marriage, that sometimes Chaucer lay at night with Philippa's head against his shoulder, listening to her breathing and the breathing of the children – Elizabeth, and little Thomas, later little Lewis – and thought, half-smiling in the room's complete darkness, how strange and unpredictable are the ways of this world, and felt the emotion he'd give later to Troilus . . .

One wonders whether, in the midst of such thoughts, the poet had to get up and change little Lewis's diapers.

Arrayed in a pretty, 'illuminated' cover, with olde-tyme lettering for its chapter headings, the book seems an obvious winner, establishing beyond question its author as the Walt Disney of Chaucer scholarship. Unfortunately, Chaucer does not adapt easily to this treatment. For one thing, too much is known about the external details of his life: his career as a courtier, diplomat, Controller of Customs, MP; his (socially advantageous) marriage to Philippa Roet; his grand-daughter who became the Duchess of Suffolk: all useful material for the historical romancer, it may be thought. But, on the other hand, Chaucer teases us throughout his poetic corpus with ironic self-portraits – the dopey figure who does not realise that Blanche the Duchess is dead; the sexual innocent who narrates *Troilus and Criseyde*; the prosy, silent pilgrim, whose 'drasty riming is not worth a turd' – none of which can safely be taken at face-value.

A certain amount, it is true, can be reasonably inferred. There would have been little point in inventing the detail that Chaucer was in the habit of reading silently to himself – 'domb as any stoon', as *The Hous of Fame* puts it. (For some reason Mr Gardner thinks that, should we have met him, 'we might be bothered . . . by Chaucer's annoying habit of always reading to himself aloud'). Similarly, we can deduce a certain amount from the poems about Chaucer's appearance. When Harry Baily says that the pilgrim Chaucer is fat and cuddly –

> This were a popet in an arm t'enbrace
> For any woman – smal and fair of face

– the joke must depend on his actually being a poppet (puppet, doll-like little person) or being the reverse. We may therefore conclude that Chaucer was either short and fat, or small and thin, or big and fat, or big and thin. The question merely shows up the difficulty of 'overhearing' (Kittredge's phrase) what is obviously an in-joke for a small court audience. Reading Chaucer, one always feels like a gate-crasher at a rather intimate party. The laughter shuts us out rather than inviting us in.

It would surely be better, then, if attempting to produce a 'life' of Chaucer at all, to write pure historical romance. And this is what we should expect from the biographer of Grendel. It isn't, though, what Mr Gardner actually serves up. There are voluminous notes, showing his debt to remarkably few sources, all of them secondary. There are hints on how to pronounce Middle English:

> *o* as in . . . '*aw*, shucks' . . . *i* is *ee*, as in '*Gee*, it's Marie!' . . . If this is too confusing, try to follow, in general, the pronunciation of the Cisco Kid: 'Boot, hombray, thees ees nut yoor peesstol'.

There are acknowledgements to S. Illinois University at Carbondale for grants and sabbatical leave given to the author; and the whole thing is dressed up as a gloomily academic enterprise. This being so, the original innocence of the book is deflowered. One's own response becomes sullied with the notion, and the detection, of error. We are confidently told, for instance, that *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, that romance of the Wirral district, is of Yorkshire provenance, and that it was written by one John Massey. Mr Gardner is entitled to the point of view. But he should not refer us to an article in the *Review of English Studies* in support of his belief without also admitting that the article in question was subsequently refuted roundly (in the same periodical) both on biographical and on cryptographical evidence.

Mr Gardner does not drink deep of the Pierian spring. But the difficulty is much more fundamental than that. Like Johnson's dog walking on its hind legs, 'it is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all'. Apart from what has been assembled in the *Chaucer Life Records* (OUP 1966)

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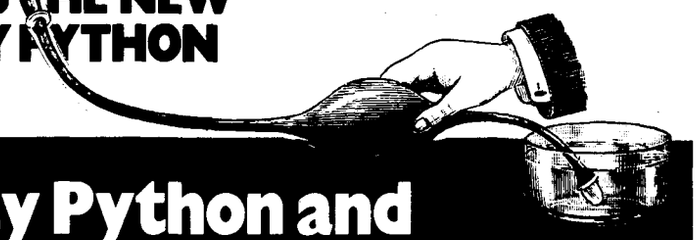

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Craig Raine

Home for the Elderly

Whale-bone and iron. It is
a seaside town inland. Waves comb in
over the beach's bald spots.

Ladies are anchored to handbags.
Shells in the ear tell of tides
and a wheezing wind.

Blood pressure and lumbago
have left these shrimps –
pink and puffed as a rowing eight, slumped
over their needles.

Outside, a dog chases its tail
like a miniature railway . . .

Lobsters struggle in their walking frames,
wear warm mittens all year round.
Sprouting eyebrows twitch like rods
at the end of a pier.

The Crab is arthritis playing scales
and other pleasures –
a Cornish pastie crimped and kept for weeks,
a concert party with a chorus line of legs,
the idea of Australia, hairy
with the names of coastal resorts
where nephews live . . .

Thumbs twiddle like wind gauges.
While I stand like a chestnut tree
looking for an ashtray,
they feel the hurricane that does not blow
from north or south or east or west,
and hold the furniture in heavy seas.

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and cautiously imaginative literary biographies like Derek Brewer's books, it is difficult to see what there is to say about Chaucer's life. Anyone attempting the task will find themselves either writing paraphrases of existing histories of the 14th century, with the 'life records' slotted in at the appropriate dates; or writing pure fantasy. Mr Gardner never made up his mind which he wanted to do.

Harold Beaver

The Big Splash

The World of Raymond Chandler edited by Miriam Gross *Weidenfeld* £5.95
The Notebooks of Raymond Chandler edited by Frank MacShane *Weidenfeld* £4.50

What was it about Los Angeles that drew the British, especially the public schoolboys with their Old Etonian or Dulwich College ties? Was it the very emptiness of this utopia – which is literally 'no place'? For Los Angeles is in some ways a curiously British invention. That elusive imagery of Southern California was first caught in prose by Raymond Chandler and indelibly fixed on canvas by David Hockney. It was they who supplied the style.

Clive James is right:

> Chandler was fascinated by the cheapness of Los Angeles. When he said that it had as much personality as a paper cup, he was saying what he liked about it. When he said that he could leave it without a pang, he was saying why he felt at home there. In a city where the rich were as vulgar as the poor, all the streets were mean. In a democracy of trash, Marlowe was the only aristocrat.

An aristocrat among misfits maybe, but only because Chandler himself felt a refugee from some timeless Arthurian realm where he had been the misfit son of a feckless and alcoholic father. He represents an extreme case, as Miriam Gross writes in her preface, 'of the split between outward circumstance and inner fantasy'. Los Angeles itself could never reconcile that split (Chandler too was to fail through alcoholism in the oil industry); but it could justify it. It was his vision of that city of the fallen angels as the testing-ground for a knight-errant out of Malory, Philip Marlowe, that sustained him over the two decades in which he created the coherent corpus of the seven full-length books by which he is remembered.

It is odd to be reminded (by Eric Homberger) that Rupert Brooke and Ezra Pound were Chandler's contemporaries. As late as 1958, when Frank Norman met him at the Café Royal, he was still wearing white gloves and carrying a silver-knobbed cane. For the tension between an inhibited Ray and a hard-boiled Marlowe found its exact literary analogue in the split between the England of his youth and the brash

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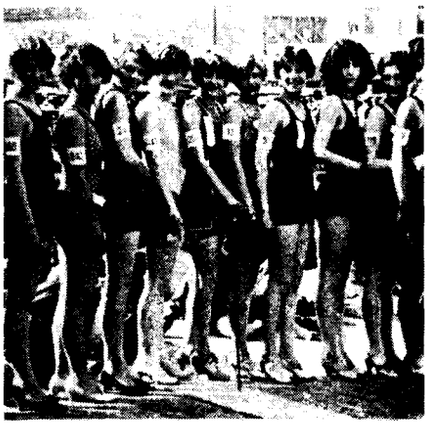

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Michael Joseph

California of his adult years, or rather in the distance between literary London (of the *Westminster Gazette*) and the Hollywood circle of *Black Mask*. 'An Aesthete Discovers the Pulps' is Julian Symons's descriptive title: for an aesthete Chandler was to remain, a decadent even, a classicist with ambitions of increasingly philistine bravado and distrust of what he would call (in Hemingwayese) 'literary heavyweights'.

That stance he could maintain only in private, as a solitary ascetic, supported by his wifely-maternal Cissy. Similarly, his private eye worked in isolation, 'in retreat from the sensuality of the world outside', as Russell Davies puts it, in retreat from 'fatal glamour': 'In effect, Chandler has postulated a burnt-out man who can resist the worst of his fantasies.' John Houseman interestingly picks up the very phrase when describing Chandler's own 'ashy, burnt-out look and his querulous hypochondria'. Again and again each contributor to *The World of Raymond Chandler* reverts to this tension, this hypochondria, this 'malice born of personal disillusion that has almost nothing to do with the crime-world he moves in'. Billy Wilder, who worked with Chandler at Paramount on the script of *Double Indemnity*, found him 'bad tempered – kind of acid, sour, grouchy'.

The diagnosis that is returned again and again is just as unanimous. His sexual imagination was suspect. It was a case of repressed and yearning homosexuality. Why else the relish for beautiful male 'hunks' and those ubiquitous female killers? All little witches and rich bitches, Clive James calls them. Why else the aversion from carnality and glorification of male camaraderie? Michael Mason argues the case at its fullest. But he himself quotes the American Gershon Legman, who seems to have been the first to notice Marlowe's susceptibility to male charm. 'No matter how "strangely" Chandler's detective, Marlowe, moons over these big men,' he wrote in *Love and Death: A Study in Censorship* (1951),

> they are always beating him up . . . The true explanation of Marlowe's temperamental disinterest [*sic*] in women is not 'honour', but his interest in men . . . Chandler's Marlowe is clearly homosexual – a butterfly, as the Chinese say, dreaming that he is a man.

Natasha Spender, in her long and touching account of Chandler's final alcoholic collapse on Cissy's death, most naturally sums up the theme:

> Clinically this pattern of childhood situations is often recognised as a determining factor for later homosexuality. By his own account this was not so in Raymond's case, though its strenuous repression might have accounted for the alert and vehement aversion he always went out of his way to express towards it. This may be why we all, without a second thought, assumed that he was a repressed homosexual, too facile a conclusion perhaps, but backed up by the fact that for all the jolly talk he didn't ever make the slightest advance to any of us nor to any of our friends.

So the British contribution to the iconography of Southern California may be primarily a homosexual affair. Or rather that Californian emphasis on stylishness, in the luxuriance of its artefacts, has been transformed into something that could be called a homosexual style. It is a vivid, self-conscious style, intent on 'giving an English variability to the "flat, toneless and tiresome" pattern of American speech' (in Julian Symons's words, using Chandler's own critical distinctions). Or as Clive James phrases it: 'A comic style, always on the edge of self-parody – and, of course, sometimes over the edge – but at its best combining the exultant and the sad in an inseparable mixture.' That is what Auden admired in Chandler. That in the end was Chandler's own testimony, in a letter to Natasha Spender: 'I must insist that I am nothing but a glib and "quick-brained" character who chanced on a formula that would permit almost infinite experiment into the American vernacular.'

Those 'Notes on English and American style' are to be found in *The Notebooks of Raymond Chandler*, edited by his biographer. Its other items are mostly for fans only: 'Twelve Notes on the Mystery Story', a burlesque on Hemingway, lists of fashion notes, Hollywood slang, narcotic squad slang, newspaper clippings, crap rules, and a quite ludicrous 'gothic romance' entitled 'English Summer'. But interlarded among the memos and drafts are lists of 'Chandlerisms', where hyperboles are allowed to bloom in the most startling similes: 'A face like a collapsed lung'; 'As cold as a nun's breeches'; 'A mouth like wilted lettuce'; 'Lower than a badger's balls'. As each was used (mainly to enrich *The Little Sister*), each was duly initialled. The baroque and rocket-like wit of the final effect derives from this precise and clerical hoard. The performance turns out to be as premeditated as anything by Oscar Wilde.

Hilary Spurling

Smash & Grab

Queen Christabel by DAVID MITCHELL *Macdonald & Jane's* £8.95

When Beatrice Webb asked Christabe Pankhurst to write for the NEW STATESMAN in 1913, Miss Pankhurst turned in an energetic defence of violence ('Militancy is, a it were, the flowering of the women' movement') on both practical and spiritual even mystical, grounds. Shops run by th Pankhursts' Women's Social Political Unio had long done a brisk trade in flints, ham mers and specially packaged bags of stones A single well-planned 'window smash' i the West End could do as much as £5,00 worth of damage in a few minutes. Asquit himself was said to be unable to sleep a nights because of nightmares in whic he was set upon and stripped naked b ravening suffragettes. And, lest any reade complain that vandalism and arson migh 'rouse the sleeping beast in men' (suffragett raiders regularly complained of sexua molestation, occasionally of rape), Mis Pankhurst declared that it was her expres

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intention to 'undertake the task of luring forth the beast and slaying it . . . '

One couldn't ask for a neater summary of the role in which she cast herself: one part frail captive virgin to three parts masterful St George. Small, plump, snub-nosed, apple-cheeked and fluffy-haired – 'le type ingénu et classique de la jeune Miss de la bonne bourgeoisie Londonienne', as an obliging French reporter put it – she cultivated well into middle age that devastating combination of dainty girlishness and totalitarian tactics which made strong men blench and strong women lose their heads. For every dissident like Bernard Shaw ('dear jolly blithering Christabel') or H. G. Wells (who thought her 'about as capable of intelligent argument as a runaway steamroller'), there sprang forth a champion like Max Beerbohm to celebrate the 'quite wonderful effect' of her 'wood nymph' charms. Whole hallsful of stern young female bravoes thrilled to feel the reins of power grasped firmly in her tiny hands; and, if contemporaries marvelled at the implacable denunciations issuing in public from those rosebud lips, posterity will be no less impressed by the remorseless dexterity with which, behind the scenes, she managed to drop, deflate or ditch virtually every one of her most loyal lieutenants.

It is the mixture of sex and violence summed up in Christabel's threatening slogan 'Votes for Women and Chastity for Men!' which gives David Mitchell's book its peculiar fascination. What specially appeals to him about his heroine is her 'tendency to hymn the millennium while creating the atmosphere of a dog-fight', and he is expert at charting the daily fluctuations of her political scrimmaging. But he also evokes a phenomenon no less tangible, though harder to define, so that the reader shares throughout Mr Mitchell's awareness of, even respect for, those forces which invite comparison between the suffragist campaign and the activities of harpies, furies, maenads, and the 'terrible visitations' of medieval witches or contemporary New Left women's libbers. The result is a biography at once comprehensive and curiously formal – no doubt because Christabel Pankhurst is one of those irredeemably public figures, like St Joan, whose meagre private lives are submerged by a legendary career, and who ought above all to die young.

Certainly Christabel seems to have been marked down from earliest years to do great things ('It was a joy to walk beside her, half a step in arrear,' wrote her sister Sylvia of their childhood); and, once the call came, she never looked back until nearly 15 years of struggle and agitation, culminating in a truly lovely war, ended in the deadly anti-climax of success. Mr Mitchell's account of her brooding bitterness, when women got the vote, makes poignant reading. A series of appalling fiascos followed – defeat at the hustings, advertising for a job in *The Times* personal column (which brought an offer to take part in a woman-sawn-in-half act on the music halls at £5 a stand), a half-hearted attempt to run an English tea shop on the Riviera with her mother. Nothing worked until, with characteristic ruthlessness, she cut her losses, sailed for the States and turned Second Adventist. For the last 40 years of her life her genius for personal publicity, apocalyptic frame of mind and shrewd eye to the main chance found ample scope in preaching the Second Coming: a not inappropriate fate for one who, at the height of her fame, had been compared to both Christ and the Virgin Mary, not to mention Mahomet.

David Mitchell

Fancy That

Loose Change: Three Women of the Sixties by SARA DAVIDSON *Collins* £5.95
Three Women: Lives of Sex and Genius by WALTER SORELL *Wolff* £5.95
Femininity as Alienation: Women and the Family in Marxism and Psychoanalysis by ANN FOREMAN *Pluto* £4.80 and £2.40
Women at the Top: Achievement and Family Life edited by Joan Wheeler-Bennet *Peter Owen* £5

In 1970 *Harper's Bazaar* ran a feature, 'One Hundred Women in Touch with our Time', including Sara Davidson – 'deft 27-year-old evaluator of the current scene'. Two years later, shuffling through her memories and her articles and – after a 13-hour tape-recorded interview with the Jewish-American guru Baba Ram Dass – purged of 'flip sarcasm', she got to work on this lengthy, emotional threnody for the doomed counter-culture. It took her four years and heaven knows how many hundred hours of saturation interviews with Tasha and Susie, her Berkeley classmates, to complete it. The result is something of a necrophiliac tour de force, a kind of *American Graffiti* of the Sixties.

Yes, sir, it's all there – the adolescent zest and self-pity; cosmic love-ins ('smoking banana peels could get you high'); shop-ins and nude wade-ins; freedom rides and sexual milestones ('heavy oral intercourse, but so tender and well-synchronised'); horny hippie peasants and erotomaniac pop musicians ('Everyone cunnilingus!'); women's lib (the Sunday Ladies' Rifle Society) and male inadequacy ('Can I only come with a machine?' wails Susie, busy with her vibrator); Reich (orgones in the sky); the New Left becoming the Old Left ('the students are just middle-class trippers, so back to Marx and the working class'); a gallery of conning gurus straight out of *All About H. Hatterr*; Hell's Angels, Ken Kesey and the Rolling Stones.

Sometimes the narrative works well and there is a scarifying glimpse of the Columbia University School of Journalism. But about half way the saga begins to sag. So many of the themes have been heavily worked over: *Kennedy's Children* memorialised the whole scene so brilliantly and so briefly. I felt a sneaking sympathy with Sara's awful 'creative DJ' ex-husband when he said: 'I knew if I sat long enough drinking whisky

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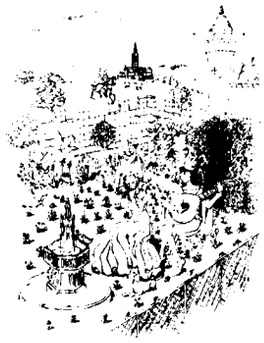

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JOHN MURRAY

and watching the Phillies, that all this nonsense would pass.'

Walter Sorell's rag-bag of a book has one important virtue. It reminds us that the all-out quest for fancy self-fulfilment is rooted in the hothouse aestheticism of the Naughty Nineties, when a few bold women with private means began to set the pace for the mass experimentalism of the Sixties. Vienna and Paris were, after all, cradles of a kitschy counter-culture long before San Francisco took over. Alma Mahler-Werfel made it her mission to 'fill her garden with geniuses', marrying Gustav Mahler, Walter Gropius and Franz Werfel and 'inspiring' Schönberg, Berg and Kokoschka ('you must', pleaded the latter, 'revive me at night like a magic potion'). Lou Andreas-Salomé tormented Nietzsche, Frank Wedekind, and her nominal husband, Friedrich Andreas, with endless talk of spiritual affinity (good vibrations) before becoming Rilke's mistress-directrice.

Like the Californian seekers, both women were much involved with psychoanalysts, and Ms Andreas-Salomé, who had several abortions ('pregnancy', she wrote, 'is the cardinal state which has determined the nature of women'), finally became an analyst herself. In her twenties Gertrude Stein (the third woman of sex and genius) lectured Baltimore suffragists on women's emancipation. Later she shuddered at the thought of heterosexual love ('if there are men and women it is rather horrible, and if it is rather horrible, then there are children') and made the spinster feminist Susan B. Anthony the heroine of *The Mother of Us All*, her libretto for a Virgil Thompson opera. But perhaps Katherine Mansfield, who does not figure in the Sorell collection, most thoroughly and painfully prefigured the coming scramble for bisexual freedom and exotic salvation, moving from wilful promiscuity to a sad, sanctified end in Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man.

In an interesting if jargon-strewn thesis, Ann Foreman demolishes Juliet Mitchell's notion that Freud was a crypto-feminist, and does her best to present Karl Marx as deeply concerned with woman's estate in a capitalist culture. She also predicts that after the socialist revolution has ended.

> the alienation of a commodity-producing society . . . genital heterosexuality will be replaced by polymorphous sexuality, while the social significance of being either male or female will wane.

In effect the hippies' hedonistic fantasy clinically restated.

With *Women at the Top*, the outcome of a stereotyped questionnaire applied to 15 'successful' married women, including Marjorie Proops, Dorothy Tutin, Nina Bawden and Marion Boyars, we are dragged down to earth with a bump. Husbands and nuclear families come first; 'self-actualisation' has to be fitted in with other priorities, the acceptance of which (say several interviewees) can be in itself creative; a well-to-do, well-wishing husband is seen as a basic necessity and revolutionary feminism as a joke, though the homey teachings of Bowlby and Spock come under desultory fire. Like the chastened Sara Davidson licking her wounds, these achievers seem to have reached Ann Veronica's conclusion that 'the whole mass of movements may be simply one coherent spectacle of failure protecting itself from abjection by the glamour of its own assertions'. And certainly, if Bowlby and Spock misled some of the top women, Yeats's 'The Second Coming' ('Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold') seems to have bemused the hippies and the pristine New Left. 'There is not the slightest evidence', summarises Joan Wheeler-Bennett, 'that society will expect men to take primary responsibility for the care of family dependants or that women generally are ready to divest themselves of their traditional role.' Like it or not, the centre has, once more, held. And that, for the time being, would seem to be that.

Maurice Richardson

Making Passes

Burgess and Maclean by JOHN FISHER *Hale* £5.25

I suppose books about them will go on appearing at intervals till the end of time, like Halley's Comet. One says: Oh Lord! Not another! But one finds oneself avid as a mumble-reader to see if the sub-title, 'A New Look at the Foreign Office Spies', is in any way justified. The biggest sensation promised by the blurb is: 'the embarrassing contents of the trunk Burgess left behind'. It sounds like a NEW STATESMAN competition. (A stuffed choirboy, an inflatable rubber model of the Duke of Edinburgh, Lady Salisbury's wedding dress, a tuft of Ivan the Terrible's pubic hair?) You'll be disappointed. There were merely character studies of Burgess's friends during the Thirties, and assessments of their political possibilities.

John Fisher, we are told, has had more than 25 years' experience as Diplomatic Correspondent for Lord Thomson's newspaper group. He is certainly conscientious. This may not be quite how Thucydides would have written it, but it is a serious try, without undue sensationalism. He gets off to a poor start, in a muddle about how the *Daily Express* first got the story of the disappearance, which they printed on 7 June 1951. But once away from the ambience of Shoe Lane he becomes quite sensible. A voluminous sottisier could be compiled from the press coverage of the missing diplomats. One of my favourite items is Colonel Oreste Pinto, engaged by the *Daily Express* a year later to follow the trail:

> His first conclusion was that the two men were not behind the Iron Curtain, since Britain was their only source of marketable information. Later, however, he pursued his investigations abroad and proved almost as hard to trace as his quarry.

A little work with Occam's razor removes uncertainties about the escape itself. Obviously they went straight to the Soviet Embassy in Paris and were flown to Moscow

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without delay. And of course Melinda Maclean knew what was going on. Yet precisely why Burgess skipped with Maclean, contrary to Philby's instructions, still seems a bit of a mystery. Mr Fisher is on to that all right, but I don't altogether share his interpretation of Philby's book *My Silent War* on this point.

The biographical parts are very thorough if a bit platitudinous. Mr Fisher is not really quite at home in this rather sophisticated milieu but has manfully read all the literature – Goronwy Rees, Spender, Lehmann, Connolly, Driberg *et al* – and done a lot of interviewing. He is accurate, except that he gets his Dutts mixed – it was Raji not Clemens who went to Balliol – and he spells Helenus Milmo 'Helenius' ('Buster' Milmo the QC, now a Judge, who interrogated Philby). Also it was Marx, not Burgess, who said that the important thing was not so much to explain the world as to change it. But he has managed, perhaps with a little difficulty – for his view of mid-20th century history is a very conventional one – to make full allowance for the sincerity of our boys' ideological fanaticism.

Burgess provides the best anecdotes. There is his curious phase as financial adviser to Victor Rothschild's mother, and his remark at his own party just before he left for America in 1950. Hector McNeil had given him a last piece of advice – don't be aggressively left wing; don't get involved in race relations; no homosexual scandals. To which Burgess replied: 'I understand, Hector. You mean I mustn't make a pass at Paul Robeson.' Mr Fisher gets unduly excited over what he claims are two new Maclean items. One is their wedding in Paris as France was falling. The other is the name of the psychotherapist (Dr Erna Rosenbaum, a Jungian) to whom Maclean went when he came back to London after his eccentric and drunken behaviour in Cairo. But an interesting point which he makes is that Maclean's nadir coincided with the arrest of Fuchs, whose activities had dovetailed with his own at the British Embassy in Washington as secretary to the British delegation on the Combined Policy Committee which determined nuclear strategy. On the whole, Mr Fisher attains no little empathy with Maclean.

The whole story is wonderfully rich in eccentricity. One of the oddest features is the way both these two very dissimilar characters, when drunk, blurted out the fact that they were working for the Russians: Burgess to Goronwy Rees; Maclean to Mark Culme Seymour, and again, publicly, in the Gargoyle. At every turn one comes across some fresh absurdity. I had forgotten how ludicrous was the statement which Burgess and Maclean made at their press conference in Moscow, in January 1956, a few months after the White Paper was published. Another of my favourites is the egregious Herbert Morrison's description of Burgess: 'I gathered that he was an intelligent and rather bumptious young man, a typical career diplomat.' There is a postscript, after Burgess's funeral in Moscow, to fill old hands in on the domestic situation. The bust-up of the Macleans' marriage was temporary. Melinda, after living with Philby for two years, is now back, if not exactly with Donald, then only a hundred yards away. And Philby, at 63, is married to a Polish-Russian lady 20 years younger. But new readers who need to begin at the beginning will find it all in Mr Fisher's book.

Anthony McAdam

Future Shock

How Long Will South Africa Survive? by R. W. JOHNSON *Macmillan* £8.95 & £3.95.
The Whores of War: Mercenaries Today by WILFRED BURCHETT and DEREK ROEBUCK *Pelican* 75p

The significance of the recent UN arms embargo against South Africa could be read in several different ways. It could be seen, and probably correctly, as the absolute minimum which the Western powers could get way with in order to appease the increasingly powerful 'third world' nations on the racial issue in general and South Africa in particular. A more indulgent view might be that it represents

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EM EYRE METHUEN

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for the first time a concerted effort by the great powers to force South Africa to change its ways. The two books under review would support a thoroughly cynical reading of the whole business.

In almost any discussion of South Africa one invariably hears a variation on a common core of hypotheses that, while arguably inconsistent with each other, are often held simultaneously by the same speaker. The most persistently held views take three familiar forms. First, what might be called the hypothesis of the technological optimist, that South Africa will be forced to change its internal racial policies simply because of the inexorable logic of industrialisation.

Secondly, there is the optimistic determinist view, the belief that the South African problem is basically a colonial one and that eventually it will have to go the way of Angola and Mozambique. Thirdly, the pessimistic determinist view dear to world-weary cynics and dour fatalists alike, that the whites will simply fail to defuse the racial time-bomb and that the long-predicted apocalypse will draw in all the races in South Africa, and possibly the great powers, in an appalling bloodbath. The near certainty that South Africa now possesses a nuclear capability gives this prospect an added dimension.

R. W. Johnson, in his brilliant book, questions the validity of the usual projections of South Africa's future. More importantly, he examines, analyses and finally demolishes the assumptions that underlie the commonplace approaches to South Africa with a rare subtlety and a wealth of hard evidence expertly marshalled. As Johnson shows, the absence of a historical perspective and the confusion of what people feel 'should' happen with what is most likely to happen are common failings that afflict the Right as well as the Left, Africans as well as Europeans. The main burden of Johnson's argument is that South Africa, as a country and as a political dilemma, is *sui generis*. In the tradition of that singular writer on Africa, Leonard Barnes, Johnson has brought to bear a refreshing iconoclasm and sophistication on our understanding of contemporary African politics. He is above all a realist and apparently has little time for either the wishful thinking indulged in by many South African Marxists, with their endless theological debates, or with sentimental liberals, who seem to believe, for some reason, that their moral indignation worries the Afrikaner. As he puts it:

> The most striking feature of the demise of white South Africa – one too easily forgotten in 1977 – is that it has constantly been prophesied and that it has not come about. The opponents of the Pretoria regime have continuously underestimated its formidable resilience and strength, and their wrong guesses have cost many lives.

And of the future?

> To put it bluntly, if the Pretoria regime adopts a sufficiently ruthless and brutal policy at home it may be able to repress black rebellion well into the 21st century.

The Whores of War is about mercenaries and specifically focuses on the use of British and American mercenaries in Angola. Unlike Johnson, the authors of this book are not particularly interested in anything as bourgeois as objective history or analysis, rather they have written a tract in which the decadent capitalist West is the recurring culprit. Basically, the view of the Angolan war portrayed here is a simplification verging on parody. I say that not because I disagree with the authors' obvious distaste for mercenaries – it is well known that since the Congo civil war of the early 1960s, Africa has attracted a particularly nasty type of European to serve as freelance killers. It might be to the point, however, before all moral responsibility is fobbed off on to some imperialist bogey, to recognise that these people go to Africa for money paid, in most cases, by African leaders.

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Alastair Hetherington

Tell All

Harold's Years: Impressions from the New Statesman and the Spectator edited by Kingsley Amis *Quartet* £5.50

Were they really 'grubby years'? Or was he Britain's 'nicest Prime Minister since Baldwin'? Both judgments cannot be wholly correct. The first is Kingsley Amis's own view of the Wilson era, and it opens this symposium of impressions. The second comes from the concluding chapter, reprinting a double-edged article by Patrick Cosgrave. Perhaps the juxtaposition is a tribute to Kingsley Amis's sense of fairness, but it looks more like a last-minute attempt to balance a rather harsh picture of the Wilson years. Of course the book is eminently enjoyable and shafted with crisp insights, as any regular reader of the NEW STATESMAN or *Spectator* would expect. But it falls short of giving as rounded a view of Harold's governance as I believe each weekly offered its readers at the time. An excellent bedside book and a quarry for recollections, but not a political or social textbook.

The best of *Harold's Years* is not about British politics but about the surrounding scene – Jerusalem immediately after the Six Day War, students in the streets of Paris in the summer of 1968, Kenneth Allsop touring Soweto with a silkily unseeing South African hostess, Sandy Gall reliving moments near death in the Congo and Amin's Uganda, or, in a wholly different context, Clive James on Betjeman's undying England. These are a reminder of the world in which the Wilson years were lived; but there are glaring gaps. The Bomb, for instance, barely raises its hideous head. And Vietnam comes in only towards the end, though it was a major preoccupation from the day Harold Wilson entered Downing Street.

I had a fair number of private conversations with Harold Wilson in that period, including one just before his first visit to Washington in December 1964 and one just after his return. Inevitably the status of sterling, the level of interest rates and the British economic crisis were his uppermost concerns. But before going he knew that he would be confronted by a distrustful Lyndon Johnson, suspicious tha British prime ministers exploited their visit to the White House to bolster their politica position at home (and Wilson, let us remember, at that time had a Commons majority of three). He knew that LBJ was going to ask for a British military presence in Vietnam which, as a Labour Prime Minister, he was bound to refuse. And, trickiest of all

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he knew that he must take up the future control of Nato's nuclear forces – the question of whose finger would be on the trigger, of Britain's control of its own Polaris and V-bomber forces, and of our 'top table' seat in future international crisis management. In the whole nuclear area he was bound to ask for arrangements that, after Cuba, the Americans would be most reluctant to concede. And all this under the shadow of severe speculation against sterling, of American anger over our raising of interest rates, and of our dependence on American monetary support.

In fact, Wilson carried off that visit with remarkable success. Unlike the two previous prime-ministerial missions – Macmillan's fraught meeting with Kennedy at Nassau in 1962 and Alec Douglas-Home's unhappy meeting with Lyndon Johnson at the White House in 1963 – Harold Wilson achieved a working relationship with LBJ. It was essential as a basis for his domestic economic policy. That was something which John Freeman's NS surely understood, even if Paul Johnson's afterwards was justly critical of the apparent results. The only substantial piece that we have here in the symposium, however, is a 1968 article by Francis Hope – as lucid as one would expect from him, as rightly damning about Harold's choice of foreign secretaries, but not enough to cover the crucial interaction of domestic, foreign and economic policies.

So one might point to other gaps – Ulster, industrial relations, Lib-Lab, Rhodesia. But why do so when there is so much to be enjoyed in the book? NS addicts will welcome particularly the chance to read again Kingsley Martin on Gandhi and non-violence. Kingsley acknowledges the dilemma that faced Gandhi, for example, when questioned by a Negro preacher from the US who had to reckon with lynching, and he quotes from Gandhi's reply: 'Consistency is a hobgoblin.' Non-violence could not have stopped the Japanese, had they invaded India, but it had a powerful influence on the British. It is well to remember, above all, that while Gandhi fought unceasingly for Indian independence he put first the manner in which she gained freedom and the sort of state that a free India would be.

No less to be savoured is Harold Wilson's own contribution – this from the *Spectator*, a review of Rab Butler's memoirs. It attacks Rab's reticence on two great turning points in his political life, Suez in 1956 with the consequent issue of who should succeed Anthony Eden, and the leadership struggle in 1963. Rab lost out both times, in part, as Harold hints, because the Conservative ranks distrusted someone of such subtlety and detachment. But Harold doesn't entirely come clean himself. He refers to Rab's acceptance of the nomination to Trinity, Cambridge, as closing for the Conservatives the option of choosing Rab as their leader. He does not quite make clear that he himself, as PM, offered the appointment to Rab – someone he respected and feared far more than Ted Heath, and someone therefore whom he wished to eliminate as a possible opponent. If Rab fails to tell all, so does Harold.

It is a pity that the symposium includes so few of those unsigned 'front' articles that set a paper's tone. There is only one from

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the NS, but a powerfully important one. It was the savage onslaught, in May 1972, on Harold Wilson's inadequacy as leader of the Labour Party. (Could it have been written by anyone other than the editor, Anthony Howard?) It was in one sense well-timed and in another ill-timed: well-timed because Harold's leadership was then at its nadir (though it had had a terrible trough also in 1969), but ill-timed because there was still too little support to dislodge Harold. Even in Labour's darker days in 1971 and 1972, Harold Wilson continued to command enormous loyalty among party workers and even among backbench MPs. That was made plain to me through the letters and comments that I received, as editor of the *Guardian*, when, less directly than the NS and two months before its attack, we indicated that it was time for Harold to think of going. As we all know, Harold stayed – and won two famous victories for Labour in 1974. Then, in his own time, he stepped aside.

'Grubby' years? No: tough years, in which there were many mistakes. Years in which, at times, Harold seemed to have lost sight of his earlier crusading vision and Northern nonconformist conscience. But years in which, as a whole, he left Britain a stronger society than he took over. Was he, then, 'Labour's Stanley Baldwin'? No, again: not least because of that nonconformist conscience which inspired him at his best. He never quite forgot his roots among the Methodists and Congregationalists of Huddersfield and Ashton Old Road, Manchester.

Phillip Whitehead

Sussed

Mr Prone by C. H. ROLPH *Oxford* £2.95

The surgeries of MPs nowadays are clearing stations for the walking wounded of the bureaucratic state. Some come, it is true, because they are in a state of paranoia; someone is slipping odourless, tasteless, invisible powders into their drinks in pubs, or the secret service has had a beam trained on them for 20 years. But the vast majority are the victims of real injustice, the casual cruelties of the welfare state, the obscurity of the Revenue, or the unquenchable desire of jacks-in-office for more and more information in triplicate. Petty infringements of the law stand high on this list. Very often the original offence is trivial, or the plaintiff himself has become a victim, as with the recent disgraceful case of Mrs Waters, imprisoned under a 1361 statute for refusing to be bound over after an assault case which she had brought to court. None of us know when we may be ensnared. *Ignorantia legis neminem excusant* – but that is sententious advice to give to the baffled and fleeced victim when we meet him on Fridays.

So I am glad that C. H. Rolph has distilled his immense experience of the courts and the law into a cautionary tale for the unwary, in a form and at a price which will make it widely accessible. It deserves a place on the citizen's bookshelf, along with Tony Jay's *Community Guide to Defence Against Bureaucratic Aggression* and the handful of clear and simple texts that tell you how to stop the bastards grinding you down.

Rolph wrote in his autobiography of the contrast between 'the judge in his scarlet robes, the barristers with their wigs and witticisms and rhetoric, all about equally shop-soiled, and the little runt sitting between two prison officers in a big cage'. He also saw, in his years in the police, how many people would never get to that cage at all, if there were judicious use of the Refused Charge Book. *Mr Prone* is a kind of extended nightmare, in which a basically blameless little newsagent is hammered in a single week by police who press every charge, by spiteful neighbours and would-be common informers.

Nearly 40 Acts of Parliament are invoked against the wretched Prone in this one week. There will be few readers who have not breached at least half-a-dozen of them in the week in which they read the book. And there is no cheating; nothing about neglect of archery practice or any medieval survivals. The earliest law cited was enacted in 1824. It is the Vagrancy Act, under which Prone is charged with being a suspected person loitering 'with intent to commit an arrestable offence', as any of us could be – and, if we came into those categories against whom 'suss' is so frequently used, would be. But did you know that the tree in your garden may allow your neighbours to insist upon their daylight under what are quaintly called the Ancient Lights rules? Or that if your dog does not have your name and address on its collar you are in breach of the Control of Dogs Order 1930, while if it gets out without a lead you are going to be in trouble under the Road Traffic Act 1972? Or that an awning which is not eight feet from the ground clobbers you under the Town Police Clauses Act of 1847?

I have only two quarrels with Mr Rolph. He underestimates the degree to which the sheer fussiness of officialdom compounds trouble with the law. On the first day of his week Mr Prone is discovered to have a driving licence which has expired, and has to write off for a new one. He gets it before the week is out. Mr Rolph has obviously not yet had to contend with the Driver and Vehicle Licencing Centre at Swansea, where they specialise in losing my constituents' licences for months on end. Secondly, he does not allow for the grasping and slothful solicitors upon whom many people least equipped to tangle with the law have to rely. The unfortunate Prone has a solicitor who knows some law, and is able to impart it. I never cease to be amazed at the inverse relationship between fees charged and services rendered for some of the real Prones who come my way. Their debt to C. H. Rolph's little book may thereafter be all the greater. The best way to avoid lawyers is to know a little law. It is also the only answer to an over-zealous copper, and we all stand to meet one of them somewhere along the road.

Harold Laski

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Tom Paulin

Mortem Virumque Cano

The Death of Virgil by HERMANN BROCH translated by Jean Starr Untermeyer *Routledge* £6.50

Last Orders by BRIAN ALDISS *Cape* £3.95

Love of Worker Bees by ALEXANDRA KOLLONTAI translated by Cathy Porter *Virago* £6.95 and £2.50

Little Tales of Misogyny by PATRICIA HIGHSMITH *Heinemann* £3.90

Virgil takes an unconscionable time to die. In breathlessly sub-poetic prose he listens to the 'myriadfold' chirping of crickets and stares at the 'shadow outdazzling glare', before finally plunging into the endlessness of a universe which is all pearly shimmers, abysmal depths and murmurous shadows. Glimpsing the 'goldly-gleaming bough of truth' and intoxicated by 'night's lambent breath', Virgil becomes obsessed by something which is either 'the chaotic primal humus' or 'the chaotic humus of the nocturnal unnamed'. And as those 'shadowy shores of oblivion' loom close, his consciousness is saturated by 'the murmuring fluids of night'.

The Death of Virgil runs to nearly 500 pages and each one of them is awash with liquid phrases – perhaps Jean Starr Untermeyer's translation is unusually distorting, but it has the air of being desperately faithful to a gushing original. Hermann Broch's novel was first published in 1946 and it was hailed by Thomas Mann and Hannah Arendt as one of the greatest, most advanced works of our time (George Steiner predictably outdid even their superlatives by calling Broch the greatest European novelist since Joyce, adding that this novel represented 'the only genuine technica advance that fiction has made since *Ulysses*'). Somehow they must have faller for what now looks like monstrously drunk en waffle:

> Flight, oh, flight! oh, dusk, the hour o poetry. For poetry was contemplative wait ing in the twilight, poetry was the night

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foreboding abyss, was lingering on the threshold, was at once participation and loneliness, was intermingling and the fear of intermingling. unwanton in intermingling, as unwanton as the dream of the slumbering herds and yet the fear of wantonness; oh, poetry was anticipation but not quite departure, yet it was an enduring farewell.

The farewell has not endured, and though the remarks of earlier critics are puzzling, the real question is whether Broch's Virgil bears any relation to the poet whose epic account of the founding of the Roman state was so completely appropriate to the polity which Augustus stabilised. Unfortunately, Broch's Virgil is misleadingly post-classical. He is a self-indulgent, recognisably Romantic rhetorician who travels far into deepest subjectivity where he perceives 'that the deepening of the ego was an increase of substance in the universe'. And in his central dialogue with Augustus it becomes clear that his subjective spirit is the enemy of everything a stable culture embodies.

Augustus's argument is straightforwardly Hegelian: the state 'represents freedom in the reality of the Roman spirit', and man realises his highest ideals in the creation of a state. Not so, says Virgil; one must 'overstep one's own borders' (imitate Faust, Broch means) and merge with the universe in order to discover 'the great image of the perceptive deed'. This mysterious act of knowing transcends the state's embodied knowledge and can't be accommodated within civic institutions. Augustus has easily the best of this argument, but Broch would have us believe that his case is 'curiously implausible', and that Augustus is a cruel dictator. In fact, it's Virgil's anti-social self-exploration which is really analogous with the fascist politics Broch is confusingly trying to discuss. It is Virgil who is implausible and not 'immune from the reversion into the humus of shapelessness'.

'Whispers of a faint boutique and the band playing its own tune . . . Alphonse Didcot reclines on a self-invented chair, reading some tales from the quiet computer.' Unlike Hermann Broch, Brian Aldiss knows how to be witty about the wilder reaches of subjectivity. The stories in *Last Orders* are hilarious fantasies which turn Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* into space-age musicals and Neffpanimate Holman Hunt's 'The Awakening Conscience'. This act of cinematic ingenuity shows 'Turner's little steam train cross a viaduct in a storm and its passengers alight at Maidenhead'. A similar ingenuity effortlessly imagines blank-faced clone-serfs, obsolescing futures, 'ashes in the air, and traces of older destinations'. And what's so appealing about Aldiss's surreal universe is his way of introducing both quirky comedy and an obstinate humanity. In one story he quotes Auden's 'Musée des Beaux Arts' and then shows how suffering happens in its ordinary way while galaxies explode and expensive, delicate space-ships plunge into infinity.

As commissar for public welfare, Alexandra Kollontai was the only woman in Lenin's 1917 government. She was a revolutionary feminist and a furious opponent of the New Economic Policy, and in *Love of Worker Bees* she tells how Vasalisa gradually realises that her husband (a manager helping to implement the NEP) is disloyal both to the revolution and to her. Vladimir has bourgeois tastes and he insists that Vasalisa dresses properly and behaves like 'a meek and humble little wife'. Eventually she rejects her role as the submissively affectionate 'model wife' and rebels against his patronising tyranny. It's a deliberately didactic story of a woman acquiring a new consciousness of human relationships, and though its literary merit is slight Kollontai's committed feminism and her revolutionary consciousness energise every scene so that the action is told tersely and rapidly – it's the narrative equivalent of the famous 'train of the Predrevoyensoviet'.

Alas, there's nothing revolutionary about *Little Tales of Misogyny*, a thin collection of failed fables in which various hairy, possessive or over-fecund women are murdered by their mates. It would be wrong to read these stories as indirectly feminist satires on dependency, because the real centre of their inspiration is the delight which Patricia Highsmith everwhere shows for the brutal ways in which these unlikely women are first murdered and then 'thrown away as one might throw away a cricket lighter when it is used up'. The style of these sterile anecdotes, moreover, is baldly second-rate: 'Christine was absolutely no loss to Philippe except for burial fees', and so on.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Julian Barnes

Always Winning Sometimes

The most likely epitaph for Sadat's week came from a 70-year-old Zulu Zionist on Ronald Eyre's *The Long Search* (BBC-2); asked about the success of the impromptu prayer-meetings she held on township buses, she replied charmingly, 'I always win sometimes'. Sadat should be so lucky, though it won't be for lack of coverage. How many times did you catch Sadat being hymned at the airport by Israeli soldiers in shapeless, creaseless fatigues and improbable scarlet webbing? Sadat mopping his nose to prevent his glasses ski-jumping down it? Sadat and Golda Meir being jolly grandparents together? Sadat playing Begin my neighbour? And the old Israeli terrorist himself getting prime-time world-wide rehabilitation?

It was the media event of the year; and much of it gave a lift to the heart on each replay, made you feel unspecifically cheered about people in general. The armada of media men flew in; Israeli TV transmitted in colour for the first time; and yet the media's participation was largely passive. There wasn't anything actually happening except that Sadat was *there*; the bargaining was strictly off camera. Instead, there was a party going on which needed filming. Barbara Walters was there, so it must have been a party; on *Tonight* (BBC-1) Sadat and Begin cosily chuckled away her leading questions. And parties shouldn't be spoiled, so only Brian Walden's *Weekend World* (LWT) looked at the hard economic reasons behind Sadat's mission. Nor did the Palestinian, Jordanian, Syrian and Libyan viewpoints get much airtime.

The active television was elsewhere last week; and sometimes too active for its own good. Maybe it's time, for instance, that someone dropped a couple of downers into Jonathan Dimbleby's pre-camera tequila. His report from Pinochet's Chile in *This Week* (Thames) had all the makings of a classic television escapade: one reporter, one cameraman, home movie equipment, working under cover and grabbing interviews with some of the bravest and most endangered people in that country. He gave a clear outline of the social effects of military dictatorship combined with economic Darwinism, and established incontrovertibly enough that Chile is a filthy country where people disappear, are tortured, expelled, thrown off the land, or, at best, made to work so hard that they have no time to think. Yet the programme's dominant afterimage was of Dimbleby's jumpily hectoring moral certitude; of Dimbleby grandly telling us that Pinochet's monument to freedom was 'a searing monument to a monumental lie'; of Dimbleby slipping the word 'fascism', like a fizzing pill, into his final sentence.

The moral self-assurance was understandable because, of course, Dimbleby *was* right. But he ought to know by now that facts and people pull more weight on television than the rhetorics of commentary and camerawork. There were the usual goose-stepping soldiers (can an unmenacing army be filmed?) and hidden camera shots of well-dressed 'secret policemen' loafing in doorways (ponces? numbers runners? Latin bottom-pinchers?). Shots of Datsun signs in Santiago had to do duty for details about how the multi-nationals support Pinochet; and while we may have believed the statistics offered – unemployment up from 5 per cent to 60 per cent since the coup – we needed to know their provenance: they hardly came from Pinochet. There is, alas, nothing like knowing too well that you're right for weakening your case.

Plainer and more effective was ITV's second coup using secret film, the *World in Action* report on the increasing use of videotape by the American police (Granada). In the contexts we saw it employed – for taping confessions (with permission), preserving a frail witness's evidence, recording a whole bogus fencing operation by police – the technique seemed to provide better, cleaner, less equivocal justice. The accused too, presumably, would prefer to argue in court – if he can – against a tape of himself than against verbals in a policeman's notebook. Mostly, of course, they don't get to argue because they're caught cold, like the gleeful crook who laughed into the cassette recorder he thought he was fencing, 'My name is Vernon Childs and I'd like to report I'm a criminal.'

One glance at the title of Beryl Bainbridge's first telly play, *Blue Skies From Now On* (ATV), and you guessed that several people were going to have a horrible time, and that one of them might well die in an inventive fashion. Who would get the chop among a gang of seven – four hysterics, an epileptic with brain damage, a stammering social worker, an inquisitive little boy – was the first question. The second, as the occasional plangencies were carried away in a rush of free-dissociation dialogue and fast cutting, was, would you care anyway? Dinsdale Landen (who turns the first five minutes of any play into Simon Gray) played Dinsdale Landen, sardonic, domineering, too watchable by half. He built the performance – rather than the part – up to a wild climax, which had him half out of shot, a mad rapist's glint in his eye, violently squirting away a whole tube of toothpaste. Quite why (other than because his son hadn't cleaned his teeth that evening) was another matter; perhaps he was just highly strung. Perhaps they were all just highly strung.

Ronald Eyre's *The Long Search* (BBC-2), despite unkind scheduling and a format – all the world's religions in a handipack of 13 episodes – which puts you off horribly, is one of the best series currently running. Eyre, unlike Clarke or Bronowski, seeks rather than lectures; is quizzical and wry yet sympathetic to his most outré subjects; and offers neither certainty nor pontification. Not that certainty would have got him far with his two latest subjects, Zulu Christianity and Japanese Buddhism. In Japan, he kept asking antique (and persuasively well-preserved) sages where Buddha was, and got various amiably dusty answers – inside yourself, outside yourself, everywhere, nowhere, and so on.

Eyre tried again in a zen restaurant, where we watched the octogenarian owner summon his staff for meditation, pick out a waitress and bash her on both shoulders with a thin paddle. This too was zen. All the evidence, indeed, pointed to Japanese Buddhism (like Zulu Christianity) being largely cheerful and tolerant, if pretty vague about itself. Finally, Eyre went to a zen seminary, where aspirant monks sit for hours with their eyes closed and are then bashed over the head by the novice-master with a longer, more sophisticated paddle. Eyre clearly couldn't fathom what the shaven-headed nutters were up to either; but at least they were very friendly. Meditation over, the novice pays a daily visit to the zen master, who looks like William Empson. He asks the master his allotted cracker-riddle – 'Does a dog have Buddha nature?' – and then roars in the master's face like Bruce Lee. Empson then rings a hand-bell and pronounces, 'Put your strength in your abdomen and speak from your emptiness. A word from the lips alone is no good.' Seven types of opacity, maybe; but again, not inappropriate for Sadat's week.

Rock Music

Mark Kidel

Welcome to LA

The heavies were out in force for the Tubes' performance at Bristol's Colston Hall. The management, no doubt fearing a display of orgiastic violence, and forewarned by the pre-tour hysteria of the popular press, had hired two dozen strong arm men from the local rugby clubs to stamp out the expected atrocities. When towards the end of the show – during a hilarious pastiche of heavy glam-rock – the whole audience stood up, the gang of meaty 'supervisors' closed in on the row of seats, standing in the gangways with their arms folded forbiddingly, like SS men at a Nuremberg rally. They watched the happy crowd impassively, longing perhaps for a chance to bash a few heads together. It was a quite unnecessary precaution: the Tubes are about good deep belly-laugh

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not the brandishing of razor-blades and broken bottles that the authorities associate with all forms of rock 'n' roll that stray too far from the middle of the road.

As it happened, the unpleasantly repressive quality of the Colston Hall's exercise in crowd control suited the Tubes' anarchic humour. It was almost as if the tons of mindless muscle had been wheeled in as yet another special effect of the group's dazzling array of very strong visual gags aimed at television and the rock industry. The show was apparently full of technical mishaps – not surprising, considering that much of it depends on the exact co-ordinating of a tape played over half a dozen TV monitors with the band's act – excellent choreography and a consistently supportive use of lighting changes. But if there were blunders, they never showed: the entire performance, a relentless succession of assaults on the eyes, ears and mind, possessed great style without slipping into the cosier reaches of slickness and over-efficiency. The Tubes change their act every night, and the benefits of brinkmanship and spontaneity are clearly apparent in the obvious enthusiasm of the band.

The Tubes are not parody satirists, like the Barron Knights or the late Kursaal Flyers, imitating with love the popular rock styles of the time: they are a good deal more savage, taking, in a particularly telling case, a Shangri-Las girlie motorbike moan to one of its more absurd logical conclusions, with a disturbing but hilarious S & M scene, the scantily leather-clad heroine crucified between two television sets, an image which more than any other reflects the Tubes' very ambiguous involvement with the American dream. The staples of the media-mainlining society and the great gleaming desires of the consumer are presented as part of an infernal nightmare, a world where our overblown values have quietly slipped over the brink. The Tubes are the terminal expression of the cancer that has grown out of LA show-business: they transform sexless and mechanical dance routines (like our own weekly dull parade of *femmes-objets* on *Top of the Pops*) into a succession of ridiculously erotic and provocative movements, beautifully orchestrated, but thrown off-beam by a touch of insanity.

The Tubes' costumes, changing often and unobtrusively enough to provide a continual sense of surprise and even unease, ranged from the bizarre of their menacing science fiction spoof to the hilariousness of lead singer Fee Waybill's minimal silver lurex outfit and outrageously high platform shoes for the over-drugged cockney hero of the decadent glitter-rock finale. The music, so often the weakest link for a band with a message and a gift for satire, was excellent, an accompaniment to the powerful irony of the act, rather than an integral part of the humour. Keyboards, synthesisers, two guitars, bass and a formidable pair of drummers built up an exciting barrage of sound, with a wide range of textures and tones.

Lead singer Fee Waybill, an attractive, almost effeminate gangling figure, sang and acted his way most competently through an extraordinary series of character and costume changes. With seasoned rock star's charisma, he held his audience captive, but the glamorous pose was so convincing that it hinted at the Tubes' imprisonment at the heart of the rock culture. Although they mock the values of the music business, they are the toast of LA, rapidly growing into more than a cult. Although they are able to laugh at their own rock game antics, as with a strong sequence in which Waybill does a very funny commercial for the band's three albums, they have inevitably become trapped in an all-too-familiar charade of over-frequent album releases and hyped-up publicity. Rock may once have seemed like a powerful tool against the mind-shrinking totalitarian hold of the mass media – and to be fair, people are actually going to see the Tubes live instead of staying at home glued to the TV – but there is no doubt that *this* is hardly the band that is likely to play a part in changing the rock industry.

Opera

Eric Sams

Bad Motifs

Lohengrin *Covent Garden; further performances 29 November, 2, 7 December*

Wagner created love-hate, as well as love-death. The hands that applauded loudest hurt the most, when they hit back. Inside knowledge enabled them to strike straight at Wagner's Achilles heel, i.e. his mythology. Thomas Mann's cuts were perhaps the most brutal of all, because he stood closest. He seriously linked Wagner with Hitler, because both had infected the human conscience with the plague-germs of myth. Even the not notably squeamish Nietzsche felt that the techniques of divine lip-service had made some words unendurable in Wagner's mouth.

Take 'Grail' as a typical instance. Let the prosecution examine the case of Lohengrin, which contains representative samples. He travels for a reputable company, with a board of knights; but the policies he peddles are surely pernicious. Thus he represents the Grail as an eccentric receptacle that flies off the handle on learning that Elsa of Brabant is being persecuted by pagans, who among other ill-natured pranks have turned her brother into a swan. The Grail's knight errant is duly dispatched in a boat drawn by this same swan – perhaps with a rather bad grace, since they arrive late and miss most of the first act. Eventually the pagan foeman is felled in unfair fight by the invincible Lohengrin, whose New Testament studies seem to have been neglected. Indeed, outrageous abuse of his supernatural powers stands high on his order of chivalry. His first words to Elsa are 'Shall I be your consort if I win?' But he knows all the time that he cannot fail; it's a con game.

'Body and soul,' pipes up the innocent Elsa. But there are certain strings attached (*Grail motif*). She must never ask Lohengrin about his identity or his origins. She agrees at once, but later instigates further inquiries. This seems no more than ordinary prudence; yet the penalty is death. The Grail is resolved to remain top sacred. Meanwhile Lohengrin has sung his autobiography and lost his invincibility. He decides to decamp before his enemies find out. But he misses the last swan, which has been taken out of service to be put back into human shape. Instead, the Grail sends its own personal Dove, and Lohengrin departs as he arrived: on tow.

Now if we believe with Thomas Mann that myths and fairy-tales are just lies, and dangerous lies at that, *Lohengrin* as a political struggle between emergent Christianity and the old black arts is an absurd and odious travesty. But those who feel with Tolkien that myth is an invention about truth may well find the present production revelatory. Music consists of immediate reality, and cannot lie. The Grail should therefore have real content, e.g. whatever each separate listener holds most sacred, as meat and drink or life-blood. The Grail motif can thus become an empty vessel made mostly of sound, yet fully open to sense. Similarly Wagner's other private obsessions, such as nationality and nobility, parenthood and power, identity and right conduct, can assume widespread and even universal validity. If you doubt that, try Covent Garden, where *Lohengrin* is showing itself to be a worthy forerunner of Wagner's later masterpieces.

But no more than that, at least not on the first night. Some significance has been sacrificed for the sake of clarity. Bernard Haitink rightly restrains the splendid orchestral playing so that every word can be heard; this is very noble of him, because the resulting sound, though surely authentic, might be stigmatised as lacking in weight. Again, finding new beauties in the score need not mean losing track of the old ones. The bridal chorus should be seen and heard, not sung off-stage behind gauze. But that singing had such unattractive features that a veil was rightly drawn over them; and some of the other ensembles were a little confused in expression. Their staging, however, was consistently alert and evocative. In general Elijah Moshinsky's production and John Napier's sets and costumes were models of economy in every sense. Some effects (e.g. in the nuptial chamber) even benefited from being stripped bare. But the visual themes of quality were rather overstressed, not just in duets and duels but in costumes and emblems. The continual black and white of good versus evil began to suggest a mixed doubles, especially when they changed ends. Other pairs of symbols occasionally clashed. Those horns, scales, arms, wings, hilts and cross-pieces, plus the inverted relation of sword to crucifix, were not always relevant to the wider interpretations venturesomely aimed at and often excitingly achieved. A small cavil: the Heerrufer (well sung by Jonathan Summers) surely ought not to be set so high above his sovereign. It looks precarious, and it breaches protocol. Not that Robert Lloyd as the King was at any risk of being over-trumped by the herald; he was admirably vigorous of voice and bearing. Donald McIntyre was equally convinc-

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ing as Telramund. It always seems easier to portray evil than goodness, and I found Eva Randova's Ortrud much more credible than Anna Tomowa-Sintow's Elsa; but both sang with fine style and fluency. Finally René Kollo's Lohengrin was outstandingly good. He has perhaps a slight tendency to soften and relax in stance, mien and voice rather more often than the characterisation requires. But really he made a magnificent Knight of the Grail, in a performance capable of converting Nietzsche himself.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Dig?

Half-Life *Cottesloe*
Shut Your Eyes and Think of England *Apollo*
Censored Scenes from King Kong *Open Space*

A 'half-life' is a technical term, to do with the dating of moribund matter: it also makes a nice title for a play about an aging scholar who has come to regard both his public and his private achievements as so much carbonised goo. Indeed, Julian Mitchell pushes the symbolism further still, and makes his protagonist an archaeologist caught in the process of conducting a dig on and into himself. 'I've been buried all my life,' he announces, as relics from the past gather in his garden: 'I'm trying to scrape my way up to light and air.' If the line puts you in mind of Ibsen, well and good. Spiritual resurrection is the aim of Mr Mitchell's Noel Cunliffe, as it was for Rosmer and Solness, and, as for them too, it involves casting off the old and hustling in the new. Specifically, he ditches what's presumably intended to be a representative crowd of liberal-establishment wastrels, including the lacquered chairman of a hundred Royal Commissions, the gluttonous master of an Oxford college and his venomous wife – and begins to chum up with the radical lady-lawyer who has been irritating him with denunciations of his 'fascist' life-style.

Well, the author of *The Master-Builder* may have provided the master-plan, but the bricks were put in place by hands that learned their craft in quite another workshop; and the finished structure is an odd jumble of Ibsen and Coward, severity and quip. Comedy of manners is, I suspect, Mr Mitchell's real strength, and he hasn't yet discovered how to deepen it into the sombre comedy of morals he was evidently aiming at when he launched into *Half-Life*. Or perhaps the truth is that his heart simply won't feel what his head says it must. The shape and theme of the play insist that he and we should disapprove of the bitchy banter that sums up the lovelessness of those Socratic groves and plush-velvet corridors: in fact, Mr Mitchell clearly relishes it, and makes sure that we, too, enjoy our visit to his verbal Crufts. Nothing can persuade me that he isn't more attracted by a civilised, rather boozy afternoon spent chatting with the wicked and worldly-wise than by the sullen and boorish company of the socialist miss whom Cunliffe ends by welcoming aboard. He just can't bring himself to sympathise with her, or even believe in her, and she's doomed to lurk on the sidelines sounding baleful and dehumanised.

It's a thin, tinny sort of role; but then Mr Mitchell often seems more concerned with his people's mechanical purpose than with their authenticity, and even his protagonist isn't exactly rich and resonant. Perhaps we would have been more impressed with John Gielgud's elderly excavation if he had seized control of the part, instead of nervously playing blind man's buff with it, as he did on opening night. If Sir John had also managed to be less snide and precious, more passionately contemptuous of the jiggery-pokery of British elitism, we might actually have come to care about what he does and doesn't unearth in himself. But as it is, the most vivid presences are to be found in the lowlands of the play, not its commanding heights: Avril Elgar, an Oxbridge power-broker with a mean glint in her eye and a pile of bile in her gut; and Paul Rogers, podgily bumbling through the part of a manservant revealed (in a highly improbable slice of time remembered) to be the one and only creature Cunliffe ever fully loved. Waris Hussein's production is pretty static, but understandably so, since the evening is more talk than action. There's lively dialogue here, and wit and intelligence, a conscientious anxiety about the state of Britain and an enthusiasm for plugging its fissures and divides, combined with a touching faith in that old wisdom, 'only connect'; but not, I fear, adding up to a particularly successful play.

Tempora and mores, ears and whiskers: a farce that depends for its tension, not on touchy husbands or furious lady battleaxes or spiky uncles with last testaments to flourish, but on a sheikh who will remove his nation's zillions from the Square Mile unless he's indulged in the slightest particular. If a city boss can't be roused from post-coronary coma to sign a protocol, he'll flounce back to Araby, and Britain herself will topple: which explains why Donald Sinden, playing a cringing accountant from the mirth-inducing vegetable patches of Coulsdon, finds himself obliged to pose as a captain of finance, and a homosexual one to boot. With that leprous, aghast face twisting this way and that, it becomes a bit easier to forgive the grosser implausibilities concocted by Anthony Marriott and John Chapman, the joint authors of *Shut Your Eyes*; but it is still a silly, vulgar business, frenetically eager to score its laughs, and, overall, rather like being tickled under the armpits by a maniac.

No time or, speaking for myself, inclination for Howard Schumann's *Censored Scenes*, a raucous fantasy involving flailing showgirls, a black pianist with second sight, and a baby-faced paranoid who persuades himself that a neo-Nazi conspiracy is responsible for the disappearance from the movie archives of the clip in which King Kong ravishes Fay Wray. Life is not what one expects under these self-consciously supercharged circumstances. Life-substitutes, in the form of wit, imagination and invention, are another matter, and more of each would help prop up an evening that too often tends to teeter.

Art

John Spurling

In Their Element

Cornwall 1945-1955 *New Art Centre, until 3 December*

A small, apparently tranquil Ben Nicholson hangs downstairs at the heart of the New Art Centre's autumn spectacular. *Mounts Bay*, painted in 1947, is a trim, vertical structure of overlapping shapes, in which the thinly-applied colours, like the hero of A. A. Milne's poem, never transgress their enclosing lines, never tempt bears. The soberly rectangular outworks are in brown, grey and grey-green but down the centre, where the composition is wound more tightly into curves and bits of triangle, there's a burst of pale yellow as well as two shades of pink and two irregular patches of rich green. The painting's authority comes from its sense of effortlessness, as if this exact balance of formal control and emotional warmth were the natural outcome of putting brush to canvas. Yet, reticent as it is, *Mounts Bay* is the most powerful component of *Cornwall 1945-55*.

Nicholson and Hepworth settled in Cornwall in 1939, in the immediate wake of Adrian Stokes and his wife Margaret Mellis. During the decade after the war, like gulls to the feast, came John Armstrong, David Bomberg, Paul Feiler, Terry Frost, David Haughton, Patrick Heron, William Scott (though only for the summers) and Bryan Wynter. John Wells gave up his medical practice in the Scilly Isles, moved to Newlyn and became a full-time painter in 1945. Wilhelmina Barns-Graham had already arrived in 1940; Peter Lanyon and Bryan Pearce were natives of St Ives; Pasmore was a transient visitor. Nicholson was by this time in his early fifties and most of the other artists 20 or 30 years younger, so it is hardly surprising if his influence seems even more important than the natural elements they all shared – the clear light, scoured surfaces, weathered colours. Indeed the work of the two oldest artists among the new arrivals – Bomberg and Armstrong – confirms one's suspicion that it was Nicholson as much as God who created the Cornwall we still imagine. Bomberg's riot of atmospheric reds and yellows is no more specific to Cornwall than Turner's golden haze over St Michael's Mount; Armstrong's neat, white-flecked hillside at Lamarna is still seen through the eyes of Constable

To detect Nicholson's influence, however, is not to put anyone down. On the contrary, the great pleasure of this exhibition is its double sense of freedom and harmony, as if the exploration of similar

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technical disciplines were in each case felt as a personal liberation. The Atlantic gales may have freshened their complexions, but over Nicholson's shoulder, after all, blew Braque, Mondrian, Calder and Miró. So here is John Wells with a delicate little contraption of spindly lines and coloured pennants on a piece of warped plywood; William Scott with a semi-abstract harbour scene where the use of strong contrasts of black and white paint partly does away with the need for lines, without losing their controlling effect. Paul Feiler takes this practice further: his shapes – mostly square – are embedded, half submerged in paint, but they keep their elegant, Nicholsonian balance to the last.

Lanyon, though he took lessons from Nicholson, seems further from him than most. The rather clumsy *Yellow Runner* of 1946 shows him already straining away with loose curves from a tight, far too crowded, central structure, and by 1952, with the flamboyant, church-window-like *Harvest Festival*, he is off into Abstract Expressionism. But although he substitutes free movement and restless energy for Nicholson's coiled-spring approach to landscape, Lanyon's fresh, airy colours and his delight in the surprises they give each other remind one that Nicholson's structural control is only half of what he offers. Having done so much to naturalise Cubism and Constructivism, he was still ready, in the next decade, to understand and welcome Abstract Expressionism.

Bryan Wynter did not follow Nicholson and the others into abstraction until 1956. It is clear from the small early landscapes in the exhibition that he didn't need to: he was after intensity rather than liberation and he used what he had learnt from the Cubists to burrow into a landscape rather than to open it out. The two black-and-white gouaches of 1945-6 and the watercolour *Foreshore with Gulls* of 1949 have a visionary quality alien to Nicholson, though they share the same antecedents. Like several fine artists, including Wells and Barns-Graham, Wynter's work loses much of its strength as it grows larger and freer and even the exhilaratingly open abstracts he painted in the last eight years of his life never quite recapture what he saw when he first put Cubism and Cornwall together.

The more one contemplates this particularly well-hung exhibition (the Academy might take a lesson) the more its line of force seems to run between Wynter on the upper floor and Nicholson below – the one using his foreign revelations to strengthen and deepen his feeling for English landscape, the other flinging open the gates of insularity. David Brown's introduction to the catalogue charts some of the art-political ructions that were caused by Cornwall's so suddenly becoming the workshop of post-war British art. Yet only half a century earlier, at the time when Nicholson was born, the paintings that came up from Cornwall to be shown at the Royal Academy regularly included those uneasy scenes of youths bathing (one of which was recently on show at the Roy Miles gallery) by H. S. Tuke, whom Betjeman described as the 'Boucher of the Sea Scouts'. It makes one grateful to be living in the second half of the 20th century.

Films

John Coleman

Arting About

Sérail (X) *Paris Pullman now; Phoenix from 27 November*
The Apple Game (AA) *Curzon*
Before Hindsight (U) *The Other Cinema until 8 December*

As befits the first feature of someone previously better known as a writer on such films as Bertolucci's *The Spider's Stratagem* and Rivette's *Duelle* and *Céline and Julie Go Boating*, Eduardo de Gregorio's *Sérail* is a fantasy about a best-selling author who ends – in effect – by vanishing up his own *ars*. Its on-the-page equivalent would be those rebarbative novels that keep insisting they are novels by creatorial interjections, now-you-see-it-now-you-don't plots within plots, and inconclusive conclusions. To do him absolutely maximal credit, De Gregorio maintains an amused, clue-trailing interest for a goodish half-hour of his enterprise. His hugely successful English novelist, Eric Sange (out of fury I checked and there is no one of that unlikely surname in the London telephone directory), is played with admirably mustered conviction by our own Corin Redgrave, quickly telling us – in the first of a lot of voice-overwork – that 'My publisher had advised me to find a country house in France'. Sure enough, he stumbles on a large, handsomely photographed chateau in disrepair; is met by a crazed-seeming girl, Ariane (Bulle Ogier), very Gothic and whimsical; at a second visit, he meets another beauty, Agathe (Marie-France Pisier), and a cryptic house-keeper, Céleste (Leslie Caron). Naturally, he decides to move in and, scenting – as we do – material for something or other, dials his publisher: 'There's going to be an enormous amount of sex in it.' Given the luscious trio to hand, this appears likely. In fact, there is not much more sex in what follows than there is in Carroll's *Alices*.

This is the dream landscape where everything stops for tease. (Viewers may recall the elusive time-bending house in *Céline and Julie*, that film's references to Carroll, and then go on to pick up some chatter about two-way mirrors in this one.) Nothing anyone says is to be trusted and Eric is, for a while, properly sardonic about this and, indeed, about his own professional procedures. Ariane and Agathe are clearly no more than employees in a charade, paid to seduce him into buying the place; Céleste claims it was originally her family home; but there are still loose threads. Is it three characters in search of an author or vice versa? Or is it, as one is increasingly entitled to suspect, De Gregorio in search of a film? *Sérail* will not add up (for all the

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diligent decipherers already sensed as crouching over their movie code-books), or not add up to much; but it has its moments of entertaining virtue: some funny nonsense about killing a live lobster, Caron's appearances as an abrupt, looming refugee from *Rebecca*, a last slamming-to – one by one – of the house's shutters.

Ever since her excruciatingly winsome *Daisies*, the Czech director Věra Chytilová has found me not entirely at home when she called. Her latest arrival, *The Apple Game*, is a promising guest on and off, but outstays its welcome. To describe it as a cross between, say, Ingmar Bergman and one of our *Doctor in the* . . . romps will do for starters. It concerns an affair of sorts, all sorts, engaging a clumsy new nurse Anna, come from the sticks to a Prague maternity hospital, and falling over (and for) little Dr John, a fellow with a glamorous, married mistress, a research project in progress, and a shared flat with his mother. Not the most probable of seducers, you might think and be forgiven for so doing, but this is Czechoslovakia (and an authentic strength of Ms Chytilová's new work is the feeling transmitted of a strange country, rather like ours immediately post-war, with sharing of scanty food and accommodation still in the air and in the streets), Dr John is mercifully not played by Leslie Phillips but by – I think, for want of fuller credits – Jiří Menzel, no mean director in his earned right, anyway oddly and effectively authoritative here for all his small physique; and the pursuing country-girl midwife is formidably present in the several faces of – again, a risk of giving the wrong name – one Dagmar Bláhová.

The trouble with the ensuing story is two-fold: it relies diabolically on what might be termed obstetrickery – almost subliminal editing in of eggs, tomatoes and those allegorical apples, across swollen bellies, births, even a Caesarean slitting; and it allows of a sour end when so much of its running and jumping time has been pre-occupied with a mostly working mixture of farce, lyricism, that peculiar shrugged-shouldered humour native to Czech cinema – and, maybe, to Czechs generally. It is as if its distaff director were still all too divided between her real filming ground and some mythical territory pronounced Chicoslovakia. No carrying wife of mine would have been allowed within babyshot of her frenzied, necking and nutty place of deliveries, even if all the squalling infants are seen to – as it were – turn out spankingly bottoms up.

In an ideal world, the best of the London Film Festival – running at the NFT till 4 December – would automatically be bought for larger public showings. In that same world, this column would have been at attention to suggest its notions of the best. Circumstances beyond its control will be limiting that function. Some films have, however, already found distributors; one or two are already in London cinemas. Of the first day-and-night's showings, Bertolucci's notorious *1900* – in the 20th Century Fox's care – should arrive in the new year; *Before Hindsight*, directed by Jonathan Lewis and produced by Elizabeth Taylor-Mead, is currently at The Other Cinema (which threatens to be just another stone-dead cinema without your support) and is essential, compelling viewing. It is a frightening compilation, narrated with his usual splashy-voiced directness by James Cameron, of what was and what wasn't suppressed by British newsreels of the 1930s about Hitler, Mussolini and company. Other items in cablese: Roy Battersby's *The Palestinian*, worthy, turgid, a memory of Vanessa Redgrave (who produced and interviewed) dancing insanely with an upstretched rifle, obviously timely but . . .; another, and really fantastic document, *Harlan County USA*, where a woman, Barbara Kopple, went in with her camera and crew during a coal-miners' strike in East Kentucky and got in so close she may have beneficially affected events; a last, dullish, textured Visconti; a disappointing Wiseman, *Canal Zone* (and I admire him and hitherto all his works); a rather splendid short about the painter Magritte, made by David Wheatley of the RCA. More, as and when.

Weekend Competition

No 2491 Set by E. O. Parrott

You'll have noticed the new series of articles in the NS about magazines. Let's have some anachronistic contributions, please – Dr Johnson on *Woman*, Bacon on *Beano*, Wilde on *Forum*. Up to 130 words; by 9 December.

Result of No 2488 Set by Tim Hopkins

We asked for a reverse Coghill: Chaucerian versions of well-known modern English poems.

Report by Little Keith

Eliot and Betjeman were easily the most popular choices; and both slipped sweetly into early English. A week for the pros, this; seven quid to each of you (for three Eliots, Larkin and Betjeman), plus a Partridge for the long-serving Fagg. As for the numerous inquiries we keep getting about the selection of the comp Reporter each week: well, there are, as they say, no easy answers to this one. There are no difficult answers either, come to think of it. Take the case of PC 49, who has already done – what? – two reports this year? A pitiably lowly member of the complex security forces, PC would hardly dare look at, let alone directly address, senior security officials who, in turn, would give their stripes for a crack at a Report. Sometimes, eating our sandwiches at lunchtime in Lincoln's Inn Fields, we cautiously ponder this anomaly . . . The shadow cast by the comp complex lengthens across the grass; we see the glint of the comp casket as it is borne in above the heads of the crowd; we hear the murmur of the scenic elevator and watch it climb into the spotless blue sky. We shrug, nod, smile. We set off back to work. We know again that our ends are shaped, by someone, somewhere.

Burialle of the Dede

Aprillé is of al the months moste dyr,
For she engendereth anewe desyr
For fickel fowelés not worthe the winnynge –
And eek the pregnant shayme of former sinnynge.
Aprillé too sends shourés pissynge doune
On them that gathere lilacks all too soune;
And sokes from hed to foote the clevere Dicke
That doth too soune assaie to pick-a-nick.
For Winter, tho' with snowe the waies a'clogging,
Is sesoun meete for boosynge and a'snogging:
Righte dolte be he that doth forbear contryvinge
In two-faced Janus' hour a deele of swyvinge . . .

MARTIN FAGG

The Summonee's Tale

A MAYDE ther was, y-clept Joan Hunter Dunn,
In all of Surrie, comelier wench was none,
Yet wondrous greet of strength was she withalle,
Ful lustily she smote the tenis-balle,
And whether lord or lady she wolde pleye,
With thirtie, fortie-love wolde winne the day.
A SQUYER eke ther was, in horseless cariage,
And he wolde fayn have sought her hand in marriage,
Though he coude songes make, with mery rime,
At tennis she out-pleyed him every time;
To make her wyfe he saw but little chaunce,
But then be-thought to take her to a daunce
In gentil Camberlee, where after dark
They held long daliaunce in the cariage park;
Eftsoons Cupide had the twain in thralle,
And this they found the beste game of alle.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

The Eternale Footeman's Tale

By Godde and Seynt Johne I sweare ye
This clerke in his time heard fram the sea
The lusty mermaides fillen ears with song.
They singen nat for me. I am nat yonge.
I have seen them ryding lowe and hye
On blanchëd billowes under blue skye
Combing the watter white whan windes blowe
From Germanie here wulfen hool in snowe.
I seye yow I have eke gan doon
With swilke nymphes to their oozy toon
Under the watter. In weedes brown and redde
I pleyed in drooned cities of the dead
With girlës fishy arsed, bothe coold and hoot.
Till spak my wyf. Hyt were plesance I woot.

GEORGE MOOR

Todes

A clerk of Oxenford and eek of Hulle
Was pleyning, 'I have hadde a bely-fulle
Of swinken: like a todes poyson, werk
Soileth my sowle, maketh my lightnesse derk;
That I moot doon, for payen bed and bord,
Six dayes swink is nat of fair accord.
Why sholde nat I with pickfork smite this beeste
Aweye – I sholde nat sterven atte leeste,
Sin otheres withouten bisinesse
Live by hir wits in gladsom recchelnesse?
Wolde I coude telle myn maysters what to doon
With hir fool werk, maugre myn pensioun.
Allas! my sowle a tode-lyke melancholy
Y-coupleth with myn lust for leyser joly!

MAY DAY

The Holloe Menne

O waly waly waly waly
Arownde the priklie pare goe we gailie
Ronde agin ar wee alle driven
Intille clocken hath struken fifen
Atwixen manie thinges ys a shadowe
Fer everie stuffen manne has hadde enow
Soe rase we untoe Lorde Godd ower songe
Alle menne ar holloe an alsoe dum
Hissen the kingdum at shel cum
Stuffen an holloe an dumbe
Thissen way endeth werlde
Noe bangen butte wampere inferled

HARRISON EVERARD

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Tony Miles

Chess

No 60 **World Title Rules**

An astonishing piece of legislation has just been passed by the central committee of F.I.D.E. It concerns the regulations for the next world title match. The newly created rules state that the match will be won by the first player to score six wins, with no limit to the total number of games played, and, should the World Champion lose, there will be a return match under exactly the same conditions within 15 months.

Now let us recall the demands that caused the former world champion Bobby Fischer to be stripped of his title. Fischer wanted such matches to be the first to ten wins, unlimited games, and, should the score reach 9-9 the match to be declared drawn and the world champion to retain his title. Thus the challenger would have to win by a two game margin.

After prolonged debates and numerous votes F.I.D.E. finally accepted the ten wins (which they had previously maintained was too many – preferring six), the unlimited games (previously impractical) but not the two-game margin (completely unfair).

Consider the implications of the new regulations. Forgetting that there would nominally be two matches how could the challenger take the world title? He must be the first to *twelve* wins (even worse than ten) with unlimited games and have at least a two-game margin, almost certainly more (the likelihood of winning both matches exactly 6-5 is very small). Furthermore he must not be trailing at the half-way stage or he automatically loses, and could even score as much as 11-5 overall and still lose. Finally should the score reach 11-11 (compared with Fischer's 9-9 clause) the world champion would already have won!

Considering that such arguments actually cost Fischer the world title I find these new regulations absurd.

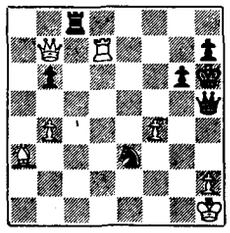
A quickie from the good old days:

White: R. J. Fischer **Black: W. Addison**

1. P-K4, P-Q4; 2. P x P, Q x P; 3. N-QB3, Q-Q1; 4. P-Q4, N-KB3; 5. B-QB4, B-B4?; 6. Q-B3, Q-B1; 7. B-N5, B x P?! 8. R-QB1, B-N3; 9. KN-K2, QN-Q2; 10. O-O, P-K3; 11. B x N! P x B; 12. P-Q5, P-K4; 13. B-N5, B-K2; 14. N-N3, P-QR3; 15. B-Q3, Q-Q1; 16. P-KR4; P-KR4; 17. B-B5! N-N3; 18. N(B3)-K4, N x P; 19. KR-Q1, P-B3; 20. N-B3, Q-N3; 21. R x N! P x R; 22. N x QP, Q x P; 23. R-N1, Q x RP; 24. R x P Resigns.

Problem 60

Black to play is threatened with mate in one. Does he have any defence, and how should the game go? Answers to me at the NS postmarked not later than 7 December.

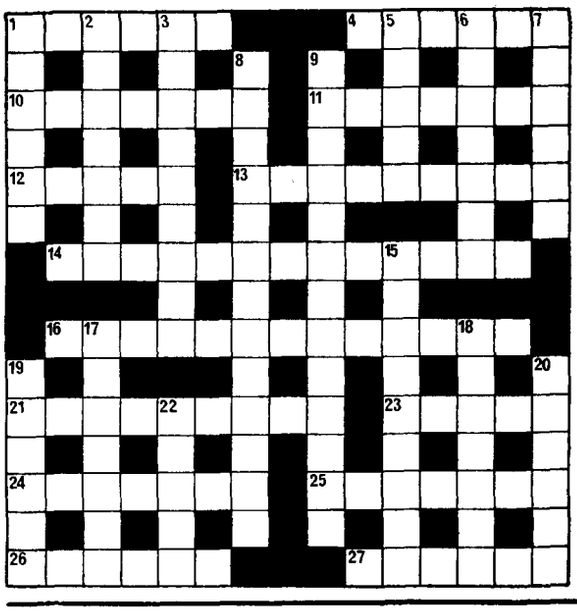


Solution to Problem 58

1. . .R-Q8! and if 2. B x Pch, K-N1; 3. Q x Q, B x Pch and 4. . . R-R1 mate or 3. QR x R, Q x Q or 3. KR x R, B x Pch or 2. B x Pch, K-N1; 3. P-QB4, R x P! winning.

Weekend Crossword 1243

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1243, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 6 December.



ACROSS

1. Cleans up gaol (6).
4. Said with a smile (6).
10. Animal one in the wrong stable (7).
11. Woman ruler found in China (7).
12. Town for a pianist with only one note (5).
13. Cube artist or expert on food (9).
14. Promise is its soul according to Johnson (13).
16. Flower for the state to keep (8, 5).
21. A back room and a wicked city (9).
23. Where the bird rests, but if pointless it would not be the branch (5).
24. Canine occupation for place near London (7).
25. Not one which may be in there (7).
26. One's characteristics are the opposite of what one is in the beginning (6).
27. Return of She (6).

DOWN

1. Stage alchemist (6).
2. Made a soft sound when perverted lust is shown in colour (7).
3. Something to eat when I came first, for example, in unsuitable ground for running (6, 3).
5. Oriental place in which a noise may not be heard (5).
6. Lionise madly although it means a kind of suppression (7).
7. Food without drink is encouraging (6).
8. No blasted gags are to be found in this luggage (9, 4).
9. The agreement is not over precedence (13).
15. Give it to a bird in springtime for having offspring (9).
17. The country is the place where one is not well and the opposite of healthy (7).
18. Surrounded by idiots he makes garments (7).
19. A priest would appear if the animal lost its tail (6).
20. Place which makes one stray freely (6).
22. Raise one among many (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1241

Prizewinners to No 1241

Garry O. Lupton (Stockport)
Joan Galwey (London W11)
Fred Hilder (Glasgow)

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The post will initially attract a salary in the range of £4,007 to £5,325 (current professional and administrative grade 3 of the National Joint Council scales relating to the Electricity Industry). Starting salary will be in relation to experience and qualifications.

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The Artistic Director will be responsible to the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust for all artistic matters and will plan and arrange the programme of the Adelaide Festival of Arts after the completion of the 1978 Festival.

The appointee will be based in the Adelaide Festival Centre which is a well established modern arts complex located in the city of Adelaide, South Australia providing over 1,000 performances each year. Its facilities include three theatres, an amphitheatre and a comprehensive range of ancillary facilities which include an exhibitions gallery, restaurants, production unit, conference and rehearsal rooms.

The Adelaide Festival of Arts is held in the early autumn of every second year and is recognised internationally as Australia's major arts festival. The 1978 Adelaide Festival of Arts, to be held from February 25 to March 19, will feature over three hundred artists from Europe, America and Asia as well as a major representation of Australian artists and companies.

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An attractive salary will be negotiated taking into account qualifications and experience.

Applications

Applicants are encouraged to submit their written applications as soon as possible, nominating at least two referees. Applicants are requested to give an indication of their availability to take up the position.

Further information is available to prospective applicants through —

The Chairman,
Adelaide Festival Centre Trust
G.P.O. Box 1269, Adelaide
South Australia 5001
Telephone: 51 0121

Applications marked "confidential" should be forwarded to the Chairman at the above address to reach him by December 16, 1977.

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Consideration would also be given to other suitably-qualified applicants, to be trained in this work, (probably a maximum of a year) During the period of training the salary would be between £3,439.80 and £3,780 including London Weighting Allowance.

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RESEARCH ASSISTANT. The Crafts Advisory Committee requires an Educational Research Assistant to service its working party on the crafts in education. The working party will be considering the teaching of the crafts at secondary, tertiary and postgraduate level and the status of apprentices in independent workshops. The Research Assistant will be required to collect information and statistics and to interview a wide range of individuals involved with the crafts in education. Some travelling will be involved. He/she will be expected to produce a short paper on a particular aspect of the subject for each of the working party's meetings. The appointment is for six months, commencing in January. Applicants should be graduates with some appropriate post-graduate research experience. A fee of £1,900 will be paid, together with certain agreed expenses. Please apply immediately with a letter setting out qualifications and experience to: the Deputy Secretary, The Crafts Advisory Committee, 12 Waterloo Place, London SW1Y 4AU.

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Courses

cont. from p. 756

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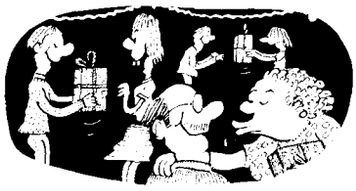

Christmas Gift Guide

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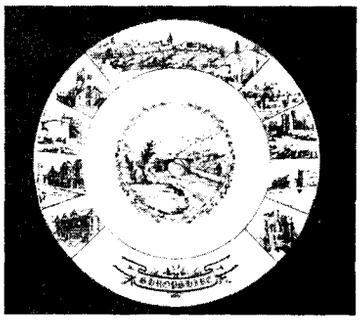

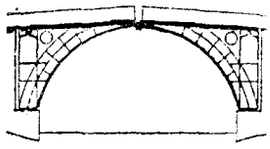

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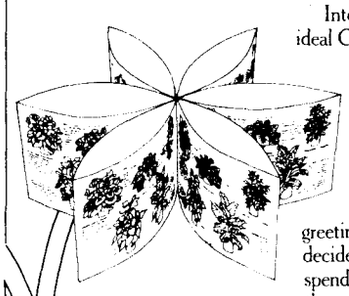

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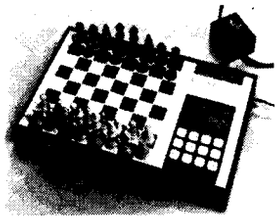

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CHRISTMAS GIFTS
Continued on following page

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol. 94 No. 2436

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Theatres

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ALDWYCH THEATRE (Royal Shakespeare Company) 836 6404. Recorded booking info: 836 5332. (Red. price previews) Jonson's 'The Alchemist', 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. See daily press for dates and times. RSC also at 'The Warehouse' at Donmar Theatre with: Howard Barker's 'That Good Between Us' (unsuitable for children) and 'Macbeth' (sold out). Also at Piccadilly Theatre in 'Wild Oats' and Savoy Theatre in 'Man and Superman'.

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Meetings

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. Admission free. 29 Nov. 'The Zero Energy House: Is it practicable?' by Dr S. R. Montgomery; 1 Dec. 'The Music Box' (Laurel and Hardy film); 6 Dec. 'The Use of Literature as Historical Evidence' by C. V. Wedgwood.

CLASSICS OF MODERN DESIGN: Discussion on the nature and purpose of design in a modern, industrialised society. 30 Nov. 7 p.m. Admission free. Camden Arts Centre, Arkwright Rd, NW3. 01-435 2643.

ALBANIA: AN EXAMPLE TO THE WORLD. Friday 25 November, 7.30 p.m. Conway (Small) Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Organised by New Albania Society.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY in England, 50 Gloucester Place, W1. 01-935 9261. Public Lectures on 'The Secret Doctrine'. Sundays 20 & 27 Nov., 4 Dec. at 7 p.m.

SUNDAY 27 NOVEMBER. 'Social Problems and Social Work'. Two social workers will describe their work, followed by discussion plus a slide show. Everyone welcome. 37 Broadhurst Gardens, NW6. Mems 20p, non-mems 50p. Organised by Young Mapam.

'INDUSTRIAL POLICY IN AFRICA', Speaker Diego Hidalgo, Chairman, Fund for Research and Investment for the Development of Africa. 6.30 p.m. Wednesday 30 November. Admission, members free, non-members 25p. Focus Group, Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Avenue, London WC2. 930 6733.

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1. Tues. 29 Nov. 6.30 p.m. 'Introducing Buddhism'. Wed. 30 Nov. 6.30 p.m. — Public Lecture 'Dana' — Roy Brabant-Smith. All welc. Sae for full prog.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, Blind Lane, Bourne End, Bucks. (Tel: 06285 26464): Sun. 27 Nov. Swami Bhavyananda on 'The Narada Bhakti Sutras' at 4 p.m. All welc. Vedanta mag. 40p.

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Wednesday, 30 November 1977
House of Commons
(Committee Room booked in the name of Doug Hoyle).

WORKER'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY Public Meeting, 60th Anniversary of Russian Revolution, 'Trotskyism — the continuation of Leninism'. Sun. 27 Nov 7.30 p.m. Cambridge Theatre, Earlham St. WC1. Speakers G. Healey (WRP Cent Comm.) Simon Pirani (YS Nat. Sec.).

THEOSOPHY Informal Forum on Basic Theosophy. Sun. 27 Nov. 8 p.m. All welcome. S.a.e. free pamphlet, talks programme, booklist, ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

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Courses—see also p. 753

Presumed innocent— yet she's in jail

Miss Joyce McKinney has never been tried for crime, and in law is innocent until proven guilty. Yet she is in Holloway gaol.

Keeping her in gaol costs YOU (the taxpayer) £100 a week — and there are 30,000 others like her, every year. Most, let's face it, are criminals. Others are only bordering on crime and won't get gaol sentences when they come for trial. Some (perhaps Joyce among them) are totally innocent . . . and for them gaol is a form of torture.

Do we have a moral right to hold such folk in gaol while their innocence is proved? In borderline cases, couldn't they be in, say, a one-star hotel and grounds, with perimeter security?

Will you help us, please, to set up such a Retreat? It could also be an alternative to prison for emotionally disturbed women. (We're not "forcing anything new" on the law, for the courts would only make use of this Retreat when they felt great compassion for defendants and did not wish to gaol them).

The woman concerned would give a pledge to the court to stay in the Retreat for as many months as the judge or J.P. wished; so the public would be just as safe as if she were in open prison . . . but this would be enclosed freedom, instead. And we would run it like a convalescent home, giving sympathetic help to women with severe personal problems.

We need money for this scheme. You can see how gaol is hurting Joyce. Please won't you hurt yourself just a little to spare women such agony? (Also, please write to the Home Secretary, House of Commons, London, urging support for this Retreat scheme, and bail for Joyce).

Portia Trust (reg. charity), head off, 38 Fisher St, Workington, Cumbria.
Send for "The Crime of Baby-love," 12p.

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